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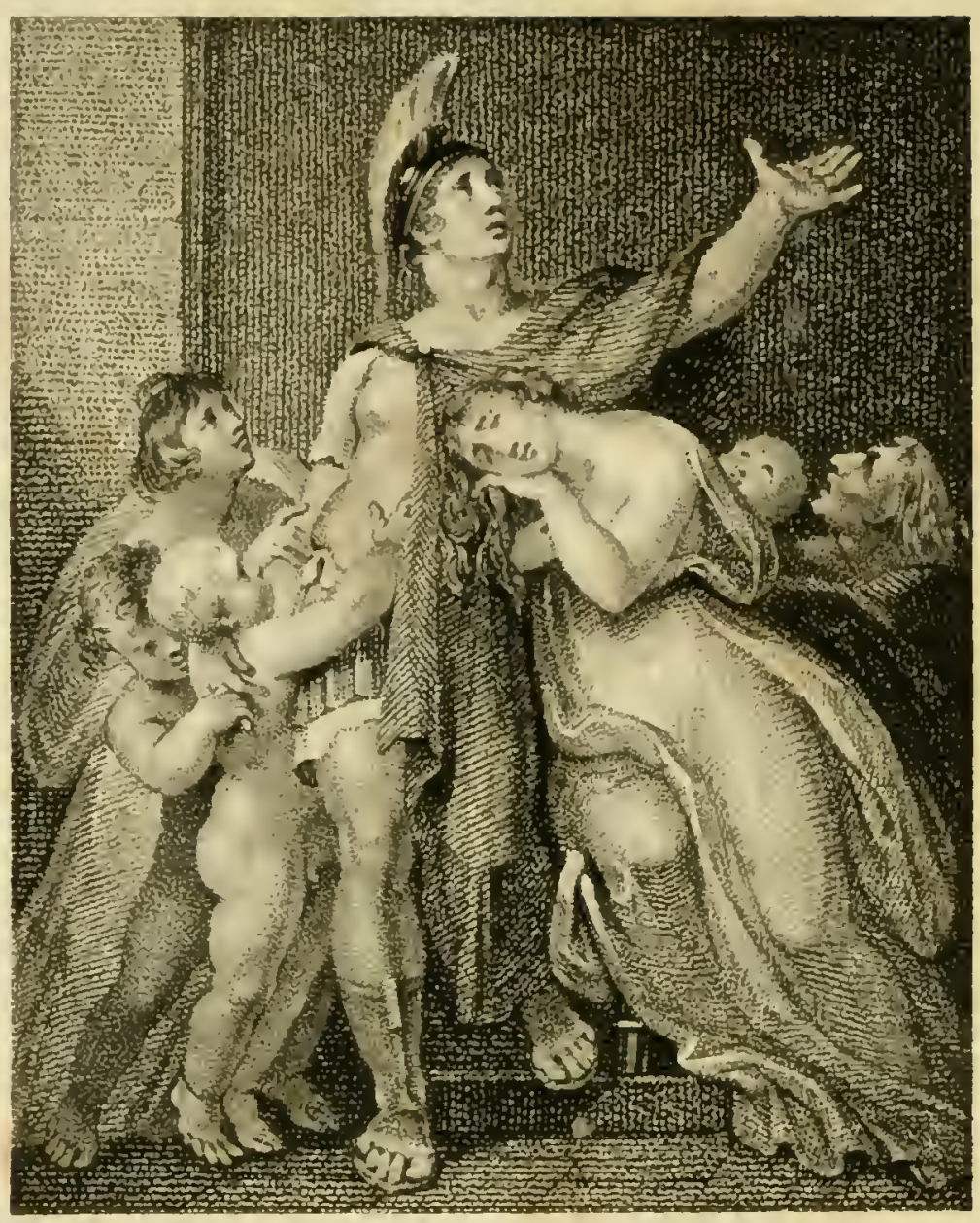

GLOVER.

Down the hero's cheek,
Down flows the manly sorrow.

Vol. I. Leonidas, Book 1.

Painted by Hª Fresham R.A. *Engraved by P.W. Tomkins*

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

BRITISH POETS;

INCLUDING THE MOST ESTEEMED

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

The Greek and Roman Authors.

COLLATED WITH THE BEST EDITIONS:

BY

THOMAS PARK, F.S.A.

VOL. XXVI.

CONTAINING

THE POEMS OF GLOVER.

LONDON:

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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

RICHARD GLOVER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ENCOMIUMS ON GLOVER.

FROM THE SPLEEN.

BY MATTHEW GREEN.

THERE is a youth[1] that you can name,
Who needs no leading-strings to fame:
Whose quick maturity of brain
The birth of Pallas may explain:
Dreaming of whose depending fate,
I heard Melpomene debate,—
'This, this is he, that was foretold
Should emulate our Greeks of old:
Inspir'd by me, with sacred art,
He sings, and rules the varied heart;
If Jove's dread anger he rehearse,
We hear the thunder in his verse:
If he describes love turn'd to rage,
The furies riot in his page:
If he, fair liberty and law,
By ruffian power expiring draw,
The keener passions then engage
Aright, and sanctify their rage;
If he attempts disastrous love,
We hear those plaints that wound the grove;
Within the kinder passions glow,
And tears distill'd from pity flow.'

[1] The author of Leonidas.

QUERIES ANSWERED:

ON HEARING THE POEM OF LEONIDAS DISPRAISED.

BY DR. W——S, 1737.

WHY such reflections on this poem thrown?
All snarlers wish the Author's fame their own.
Why slept the great Leonidas so long?—
To wake immortal, by our Glover's song.
Why did nor Greece, nor Rome, this story tell?—
To show Great Britain could them both excel.

THE

PREFACE.

To illustrate the following poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to show, by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought it would not be improper to fix the subsequent narration.

While Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedæmon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately exposed by an uncertain rumour, which rendered his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceived a personal resentment against him: for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, named Leutychides, who aspired to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus, by the base practices of his colleague Cleomenes, and of his kinsman Leutychides, Demaratus was expelled

from his regal office in the commonwealth; a Lacedæmonian, distinguished in action and council, and the only king of Sparta, who, by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increased the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes, Leonidas became king, who ruled in conjunction with this Leutychides when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions; as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly, not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censured by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority which have procured to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of 'the father of history.' On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth, to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who

returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the preservation of Lacedæmon; and, marching to Thermopylæ, possessed himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen; who, with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states which adjoined to Thermopylæ, composed an army of near eight thousand men.

Xerxes was now advanced as far as Thessalia; when, hearing that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedæmonians at their head, and among the rest Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatched a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approached, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raised by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ on the side of Greece; so that his whole attention was engaged by those who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanced to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonished the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises; others were combing their hair; and all discovered a total disregard of him, whom they suffered to depart, and report to Xerxes what he had seen; which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this strange

behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair, when they were determined to fight to the last extremity. Xerxes, notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies; which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter: fresh troops still succeeded, but with no better fortune than the first; being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms, both offensive and defensive.

Plutarch, in his Laconic apothegms, reports that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ; till he was extricated from his distress by a Malian, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand

of the Persian army into Greece, through a pass which lay higher up the country, among the mountains of Œta: whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who, upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and with the utmost expedition marched to Thermopylæ.

Leonidas no sooner received information that the Barbarians had passed the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat; reserving the three hundred Spartans and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they followed him with reluctance at first, he now compelled to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus; and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians the most conspicuous next to Leonidas was Dieneces, who, being told that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, 'the battle would then be in the shade.' Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maron, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megistias, a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refused to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety; but sent away his only

son, and remained himself behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

Herodotus relates that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ; where, being encompassed by the Persians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies: but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others, affirm, that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning have withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus: 'The Grecians, having now rejected all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously called on their general to lead them against the Persians before they could be apprized that their friends had passed round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine, as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself, in consequence of this command, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance in danger. After a short refreshment, the Grecians were now prepared, and received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to put all they met to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion; when, formed into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they marched against the Persians, and entered their camp at the dead of night. The

Barbarians, wholly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing that their friends were defeated, and themselves attacked by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies; for, as night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue. The want of command, of a watch-word, and of confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians, without difficulty, might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion by his death; but he at the beginning of the tumult betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation; when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those who were left behind; then, while night lasted, they ranged through the whole camp in diligent search of the tyrant. When morning appeared, the Persians, perceiving the true state of things, held the inconsiderable number of their enemies in contempt; yet were so terrified at their valour, that they avoided a near engagement; but, enclosing the Grecians on every side, showered their darts and arrows upon them at a distance, and in the end destroyed their whole body. In this manner fell the Grecians, who, under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ. All

must admire the virtue of these men, who with one consent, maintaining the post allotted by their country, cheerfully renounced their lives for the common safety of Greece, and esteemed a glorious death more eligible than to live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbarians could have conjectured such an event? Who could have expected that five hundred men would have dared to attack a million? Wherefore, shall not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men, as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of their lives was the necessary consequence of their undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit; and among all the great names, delivered down to remembrance, are the only heroes who obtained more glory in their fall than others from the brightest victories? With justice may they be deemed the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even preferably to those who were conquerors in the battles fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the memory of that valour, exerted in the defence of Thermopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole, there never were any before these who attained to immortality through the mere excess of virtue; whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been recorded by historians only, but hath been celebrated by numbers of poets; among others, by Simonides the lyric.'

Pausanias, in his Laconics, considers the defence of Thermopylæ by Leonidas as an action superior to any atchieved by his contemporaries,

and to all the exploits of preceding ages. ‘ Never (says he) had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces under Hydarnes been conducted through a path over mount Œta; and, by that means encompassing the Greeks, overcome and slain Leonidas.’ Nor is it improbable that such a commander, at the head of such troops, should have maintained his post in so narrow a pass till the whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine. At the same time his navy had been miserably shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave companions, so meritorious to their country, and so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a high degree of veneration and applause from past ages, that few among the ancient compilers of history have been silent on this amazing instance of magnanimity, and zeal for liberty; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some on the whole body, others on particulars, who died at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in every nation conversant with learning, and at this distance of time still rendering their virtue the object of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer than to take this public occasion of expressing my sincere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and the sense of my obligations for the early honour of his friendship. To him I inscribe the following poem; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguished by his disinterest-

ed zeal and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life than in the field: to him therefore a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory and love of liberty, is due from the nature of the subject.

R. GLOVER.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

Xerxes, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and passed over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece; the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprized of his march into Thrace, than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the straits of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leutychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no farther than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hundred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany and die with him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus. Leonidas, after an interview with his queen, departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is joined by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus; those who are already possessed of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother Polydorus in Persia.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK I.

The virtuous Spartan who resign'd his life
To save his country at the' Œtæan straits,
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,
O Muse, record! The Hellespont they pass'd,
O'erpowering Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift
To Corinth flew. Her Isthmus was the seat
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full
He finds the Spartan people with their kings;
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
From Hercules descended. They the sons
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd, to learn
The sacred mandates of the' immortal gods,
That morn expected from the Delphian dome.
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,
And thus address'd them: 'For immediate war,
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.'
Here Alpheus paus'd. Leutychides, who shar'd
With great Leonidas the sway, uprose
And spake:—'Ye citizens of Sparta, hear!
Why from her bosom should Laconia send

Her valiant race to wage a distant war
Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd
Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,
Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood
That Isthmus inaccessible secures.
There let our standards rest. Your solid strength
If once you scatter, in defence of states
Remote and feeble, you betray your own,
And merit Jove's derision.'—With assent
The Spartans heard. Leonidas replied—
'Oh most ungenerous counsel! most unwise!
Shall we, confining to that Isthmian fence
Our efforts, leave beyond it every state
Disown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets
Unceasing watch the' innumerable foes,
And trust the' impending dangers of the field
To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear
That to Barbarian violence we leave
Her unprotected walls? Her hoary sires,
Her helpless matrons, and their infant race
To servitude and shame? Her guardian gods
Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main,
With Pallas, power of wisdom, at their helms,
Will soon transport them to a happier clime,
Safe from insulting foes, from false allies;
And Eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.
Then shall we feel the unresisted force
Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains
With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,
By us betray'd to bondage, will support
A Persian lord, and lift the' avenging spear
For our destruction. But, my friends, reject
Such mean, such dangerous counsels, which would
blast

Your long establish'd honours, and assist
The proud invader. O eternal king
Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!
Each low and partial passion thence expel!
Greece is our general mother. All must join
In her defence, or separate each must fall.'
This said; authority and shame controll'd
The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd.
He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,
Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,
The Pythian maid unfolded heaven's decrees.
He came; but discontent and grief o'ercast
His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,
Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread
Each heart relax'd. On every visage hung
Sad expectation. Not a whisper told
The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd,
All still as death, to hear the solemn tale.
As o'er the western waves, when every storm
Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,
Soft breathing, lightly with its wings along
The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear
Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse;
None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,
Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main;
So through the wide and listening crowd no sound,
No voice, but thine, O Agis! broke the air;
While thus the issue of thy awful charge
Thy lips deliver'd:—'Spartans, in your name
I went to Delphi. I inquir'd the doom
Of Lacedæmon from the' impending war,
When in these words the deity replied—
"Inhabitants of Sparta, Persia's arms
Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust,

Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,
Cause Lacedæmon for his death to mourn."—
As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd
The snakes of dire Medusa, all who view'd
The Gorgon features were congeal'd to stone,
With ghastly eyeballs, on the hero bent,
And horror, living in their marble form;
Thus, with amazement rooted where they stood,
In speechless terror frozen, on their kings
The Spartans gaz'd: but soon their anxious looks
All on the great Leonidas unite,
Long known his country's refuge. He alone
Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays
His godlike presence. Dignity and grace
Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins
With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine
Sublimest virtue and desire of fame,
Where justice gives the laurel; in his eye
The inextinguishable spark, which fires
The souls of patriots; while his brow supports
Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.
Serene he cast his looks around, and spake—
'Why this astonishment on every face,
Ye men of Sparta? does the name of death
Create this fear and wonder? O my friends,
Why do we labour through the arduous paths
Which lead to virtue? Fruitless were the toil,
Above the reach of human feet were plac'd
The distant summit, if the fear of death
Could intercept our passage. But a frown
Of unavailing terror he assumes
To shake the firmness of a mind which knows
That, wanting virtue, life is pain and woe,
That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,

And looks around for happiness in vain.
Then speak, O Sparta! and demand my life:
My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,
And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame
The gods allow to many; but to die
With equal lustre is a blessing Jove
Among the choicest of his boons reserves,
Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.'
Salvation thus to Sparta he proclaim'd.
Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,
Suspending praise; nor praise at last resounds
In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n;
A reverential murmur breathes applause.
So were the pupils of Lycurgus train'd
To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb
Before their senate, ephori, and kings,
Nor exultation into clamour broke.
Amidst them rose Dieneces, and thus—
'Haste to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes show
The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd
In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,
Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger, bend.
Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands
To slavery and rapine. They will shrink
Before your standard, and their native seats
Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye sires,
Who with a growing race have bless'd the state:
That race, your parents, general Greece, forbid
Delay. Heaven summons. Equal to the cause
A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more?'
Bold Alpheus next: 'Command my swift return
Amid the Isthmian council, to declare
Your instant march.' His dictates all approve.
Back to the Isthmus he unwearied speeds.

Now from the' assembly with majestic steps
Forth moves their godlike king, with conscious worth
His generous bosom glowing. Such the port
Of his divine progenitor; impell'd
By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod
Invincible, to face in horrid war
The triple form of Geryon, or against
The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.
Say, Muse, what heroes, by example fir'd,
Nor less by honour, offer'd now to bleed?
Dieneces the foremost, brave and staid,
Of veteran skill to range in martial fields
Well-order'd lines of battle. Maron next,
Twin-born with Alpheus, shows his manly frame.
Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen
Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war
His tried companion. Graceful were his steps,
And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul
Preserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd
By arts unknown to Lacedæmon's race.
High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal
Support and counsel from the gods requir'd,
Was sent the hallow'd messenger, to learn
Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,
From rocky Delphi, from Dodona's shade,
Or sea-encircled Delos, or the cell
Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.
Three hundred more complete the' intrepid band;
Illustrious fathers all of generous sons,
The future guardians of Laconia's state.
Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son,
Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood
Were they. Megistias, heaven-enlighten'd seer,
Had left his native Acarnanian shore;

Along the border of Eurotas chose
His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,
And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath
Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,
Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm
From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught
To wield the sword, and poise the weighty spear.
But to his home Leonidas retir'd.
There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd
His mighty soul, while nature in his breast
A short emotion rais'd :—' What sudden grief,
What cold reluctance, now unmans my heart,
And whispers that I fear? Can death dismay
Leonidas; death, often seen and scorn'd,
When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?
Or to relinquish life in all its pride,
With all my honours blooming round my head,
Repines my soul; or rather to forsake,
Eternally forsake, my weeping wife,
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?
Leonidas, awake! Shall these withstand
The public safety? Hark! thy country calls.
O sacred voice, I hear thee. At the sound
Reviving Virtue brightens in my heart;
Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive
My unreluctant hand. Immortal Fame,
Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,
With wings unwearied wilt protect my tomb.'
His virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd
When Agis enter'd: ' If my tardy lips,
(He thus began) have hitherto forborne
To bring their grateful tribute of applause,
Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,

Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief
Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man!
Though Lacedæmon claim thy prime regard,
Forget not her, sole victim of distress
Amid the general safety. To assuage
Such pain, fraternal tenderness is weak.'
The king embrac'd him, and replied, 'O best,
O dearest man! conceive not but my soul
To her is fondly bound, from whom my days
Their largest share of happiness deriv'd.
Can I who yield my breath lest others mourn,
Lest thousands should be wretched, when she pines,
More lov'd than any, though less dear than all,
Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,
If thou with grateful memory record
My name and fate, O Sparta! pass not this
Unheeded by. The life for thee resign'd
Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul,
Nor were they common joys I left behind.'
So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd
In tenderest passion. Then, in eager haste
The faithful partner of his bed he sought.
Amid her weeping children sat the queen,
Immovable and mute. Her swimming eyes
Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er
Her labouring bosom, blotted with her tears.
As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,
The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads
The radiant vesture of her silver light
O'er the dull face of nature; so the queen,
Divinely graceful, shining through her grief,
Brighten'd the cloud of woe. Her lord approach'd.
Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice

Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time
Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.
She gives this utterance to her tender thoughts—
'O thou, whose presence is my sole delight;
If thus Leonidas, thy looks and words
Can check the rapid current of distress,
How am I mark'd for misery! How long!
When of life's journey less than half is pass'd,
And I must hear those calming sounds no more,
Nor see that face which makes affliction smile!'
This said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.
Her orphan children, her devoted lord,
Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,
Her ever-during solitude of woe,
All rise in mingled horror to her sight,
When thus in bitterest agony she spake—
'O whither art thou going from my arms?
Shall I no more behold thee? Oh! no more,
In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,
Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil,
And find thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,
Why would'st thou hurry to the dreary gates
Of death, uncall'd? Another might have bled,
Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,
Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure.
Now every eye with mine is drown'd in tears.
All with these babes lament a father lost.
Alas! how heavy is our lot of pain!
Our sighs must last when every other breast
Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss.
Thou didst not heed our anguish—didst not seek
One pause for my instruction how to bear
Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.'

Unutterable sorrow here confin'd
Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd—
'I see, I share thy agony. My soul
Ne'er knew how warm the prevalence of love,
How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour;
Nor was she once insensible to thee
In all her fervour to assert my fame.
How had the honours of my name been stain'd
By hesitation? Shameful life, preferr'd
By an inglorious colleague, would have left
No choice but what were infamy to shun,
Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more
That, of thy love regardless, or thy tears,
I rush uncall'd to death. The voice of fate,
The gods, my fame, my country, press my doom.
Oh! thou dear mourner! Wherefore swells afresh
That tide of woe? Leonidas must fall.
Alas! far heavier misery impends
O'er thee and these; if, soften'd by thy tears,
I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,
Which justice, glory, liberty, and heav'n,
Claim for my country, for my sons, and thee.
Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart
E'er known a pause in love, or pious care?
Now shall that care, that tenderness be shown
Most warm, most faithful. When thy husband dies
For Lacedæmon's safety; thou wilt share,
Thou and thy children, the diffusive good.
I am selected by the' immortal gods
To save a people. Should my timid heart
That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge
Thee too in shame, in sorrow. Thou wouldst mourn

With Lacedæmon; wouldst with her sustain
Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.
Behold thy sons, now worthy of their name,
Their Spartan birth. Their glowing bloom would pine
Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts
Beat at the sound of liberty no more.
On their own merit, on their father's fame,
When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,
Before the world illustrious will they rise,
Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.'
Here paus'd the patriot. In religious awe
Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint
The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow;
Ceas'd for a moment, soon again to stream.
Behold in arms before the palace drawn,
His brave companions of the war demand
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs, renew'd,
Surpassing utterance, intercept her sighs.
Each accent freezes on her faltering tongue.
In speechless anguish on the hero's breast
She sinks. On every side his children press,
Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.
His soul no longer struggles to confine
Her agitation. Down the hero's cheek,
Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in woe,
Amid his children, who enclose him round,
He stands indulging tenderness and love
In graceful tears, when thus, with lifted eyes
Address'd to heaven, 'Thou ever-living pow'r,
Look down propitious, sire of gods and men!
O to this faithful woman, whose desert
May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace!
And thou my bright forefather, seed of Jove,

O Hercules, neglect not these thy race!
But since that spirit I from thee derive
Transports me from them to resistless fate,
Be thou their guardian! Teach them, like thyself,
By glorious labours to embellish life,
And from their father let them learn to die!'
Here ending, forth he issues, and assumes
Before the ranks his station of command.
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n
On Phlegra's plains, to meet the giant-sons
Of earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd
The deities embattled; while their king
Tower'd in the front, with thunder in his grasp.
Thus through the streets of Lacedæmon pass'd
Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow
The multitude exulting. On he treads
Rever'd. Unsated, their enraptur'd sight
Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues
Extol and hail him as their guardian god.
Firm in his nervous hand he gripes the spear.
Low as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs
The massy shield, and o'er his burnish'd helm
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,
Around whose brows entwining laurels play,
In lofty-sounding strains his praise record;
While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way
Bestrew with odorous garlands. Now his breast
Is all possess'd by glory: which dispell'd
Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret
For those he left behind. The reverend train
Of Lacedæmon's senate last appear,
To take their final, solemn leave, and grace
Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow
In civil pomp their venerable robes,

Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop
Of warriors press behind him. Maron here,
With Menalippus, warm in flowery prime;
There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief
Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend
The loftiest mansions; thronging o'er the roofs,
Applaud their sons, their husbands, as they march.
So parted Argo from the' Iolchian strand
To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,
Rang'd on the cliffs, o'ershading Neptune's face,
Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes
Admiring; still in pæans bless'd the helm,
By Greece intrusted with her chosen sons
For high adventures on the Colchian shore.
Swift on his course Leonidas proceeds.
Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,
Where his victorious ancestor subdued
The many-headed Hydra, and the lake
To endless fame consign'd. The' unwearied bands
Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,
And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.
Six days incessant was their march pursued,
When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves
Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.
Below the wide horizon then the sun
Had dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night
Gleam'd from the centre of the' ethereal vault,
And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed
Her placid light. Leonidas detains
Dieneces and Agis. Open stands
The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
As here they sit conversing, from the hill,
Which rose before them, one of noble port
Is seen descending. Lightly down the slope

He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew
The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd—
'O thou, with swiftness by the gods endued
To match the ardour of thy daring soul,
What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks
Neglect to arm and face the public foe?'
'Good news gives wings,' said Alpheus. 'Greece is arm'd.
The neighbouring Isthmus holds the' Arcadian bands.
From Mantinea Diophantus leads
Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls
With Hegesander move. A thousand more,
Who in Orchomenus reside, and range
Along Parrhasius or Cyllene's brow,
Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,
Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs,
Expect thy presence. Most is Clonius fam'd,
Of stature huge, unshaken rock of war.
Four hundred warriors brave Alcmæon draws
From stately Corinth's towers. Two hundred march
From Phlius: them Eupalamus commands.
An equal number of Mycenæ's race
Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone
Of thee, and threatening Greece, the Thebans arm.
A few in Thebes authority and rule
Usurp. Corrupted with Barbarian gold,
They quench the generous, eluthérian flame
In every heart. The eloquent they bribe.
By specious tales the multitude they cheat;
Establishing base measures on the plea
Of public safety. Others are immers'd
In all the sloth of plenty, who, unmov'd,
In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd.

Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field.
The wily Anaxander is their chief,
With Leontiades. To see their march
I staid; then hasten'd to survey the straits,
Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.
'For ever mingled with a crumbling soil,
Which moulders round the' indented Malian coast,
The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,
Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,
Thermopylæ is stretch'd. Where broadest spread,
It measures threescore paces, bounded here
By the salt ooze, which underneath presents
A dreary surface; there the lofty cliffs
Of wooded Œta overlook the pass,
And far beyond, o'er half the surge below,
Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth
An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,
A wall with gates and towers. The Locrian force
Was marching forward. Them I pass'd, to greet
Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch'd
Seven hundred spears before the' important fence.
His brother's son attends the reverend chief,
Young Dithyrambus. He for noble deeds,
Yet more for temperance of mind, renown'd,
In early bloom with brightest honours shines,
Nor wantons in the blaze.' Here Agis spake—
'Well hast thou painted that illustrious youth.
He is my host at Thespia. Though adorn'd
With various wreaths, by fame by fortune bless'd,
His gentle virtues take from Envy's lips
Their blasting venom; and her baneful eye
Strives on his worth to smile.' In silence all
Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds—
'Platæa's chosen veterans I saw,

Small in their number, matchless in their fame.
Diomedon the leader. Keen his sword
At Marathon was felt, where Asia bled.
These guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,
Unknown to strangers, winds an upper strait,
Which by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.
Ere these brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay
A stately chieftain of the' Athenian fleet
Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praise,
He utter'd rapture, but austerely blam'd
Laconia's tardy counsels; while the ships
Of Athens long had stemm'd Eubœan tides,
Which flow not distant from our future post.
This was the far-fam'd Æschylus, by Mars,
By Phœbus lov'd. Parnassus him proclaims
The first of Attic poets; him the plains
Of Marathon a soldier, tried in arms.'

'Well may Athenians murmur, (said the king:)
Too long hath Sparta slumber'd on her shield.
By morn beyond the Isthmus we will spread
A generous banner. In Laconian strains
Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame
Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attract
The brighter muse of Athens, in the song
Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.
Share in our fate; or, hastening home, report
How much already thy discerning mind,
Thy active limbs, have merited from me;
How serv'd thy country.' From the' impatient lips
Of Alpheus swift these fervid accents broke—

'I have not measur'd such a tract of land,
Have not untir'd, beheld the setting sun,
Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps,
To animate the Grecians, that myself

Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.
Return? Ah! no. A second time my speed
Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs
Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain
An honourable grave. And, oh! amid
His country's perils, if a Spartan breast
May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge
I seek; not only for the' insulted state,
But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,
Than I and Maron, bless'd our father's years,
Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.
His mind, while tender in his opening prime,
Was bent to strenuous virtue. Generous scorn
Of pain or danger, taught his early strength
To struggle patient with severest toils.
Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,
When frozen showers had swoln Eurotas' stream,
Amid the' impetuous channel would he plunge,
To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,
As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,
A savage corsair of the Persian king,
My brother, naked and defenceless, bore,
Ev'n in my sight, to Asia; there to waste,
With all the promise of its growing worth,
His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,
Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,
The days he wept, the sleepless nights he beat
His aged bosom: and shall Alpheus' spear
Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,
O Polydorus! vengeance for thy wrongs,
In that first slaughter of the barbarous foe?'
Here interpos'd Dieneces. Their hands
He grasp'd, andcordial transport thus express'd—

'O that Lycurgus from the shades might rise
To praise the virtue which his laws inspire!'
Thus, till the dead of night, these heroes pass'd
The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd
Each other's virtue. Happiest of men!
At length, with gentle heaviness, the power
Of sleep invades their eyelids, and constrains
Their magnanimity and zeal to rest;
When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon
Immers'd in midnight-shade her silver head.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds, in conjunction with these forces, towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is joined by Dithyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertained by Oïleus, the public host of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompanied by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oïleus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is informed that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK II.

Aurora spreads her purple beams around,
When move the Spartans. Their approach is known.
The Isthmian council, and the different chiefs
Who lead the' auxiliar bands, advance to meet
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong,
Alcmæon, Clonius, Diophantus brave,
With Hegesander. At their head is seen
Aristobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks
Obey; Mycenæ, once august in power,
In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name
Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king
The chieftain spake—' Leonidas, survey
Mycenæ's race. Should every other Greek
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,
Believe not we can fear, deriv'd from those
Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge
The strength of Greece; who desart left the fields
Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls
From their foundations levell'd to the ground.'
Leonidas replies not, but his voice
Directs to all—' Illustrious warriors, hail!
Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,
Your generous ardour, in the common cause.
But you whose counsels prop the Grecian state,

O venerable synod, who consign
To our protecting sword the gate of Greece,
Thrice hail! Whate'er by valour we obtain,
Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes
Contemplate every city, and discern
Their various tempers. Some, with partial care,
To guard their own, neglect the public weal.
Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,
Corruption there presides. O fire the brave
To general efforts in the general cause.
Confirm the wavering. Animate the cold,
The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray
Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,
Or call them back to honour. Let us all
Be link'd in sacred union, and this land
May face the world's whole multitude in arms.
If for the spoil, by Paris borne to Troy,
A thousand keels the Hellespont o'erspread,
Shall not again confederated Greece
Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give
What once she gave to fame? Behold, we haste
To stop the invading tyrant. Till we fall,
He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.
But, as the gods conceal how long our strength
May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield,
Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece
Range all her free-born numbers in the field.'

Leonidas concluded. Awful stept
Before the sage assembly one, supreme
And old in office, who address'd the king—

'Thy bright example every heart unites.
From thee her happiest omens Greece derives
Of concord, safety, liberty and fame.
Go then, O first of mortals! go, impress

Amaze and terror on the barbarous host;
The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem
Less dear than honour, and their country's cause.'
  This heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,
Exulting, tasted of the sweet reward
Due to thy name through endless time. Once more
His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapturous thought
His native land, which he alone can save;
Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er
The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind
In deep arrangement. So the' imperial ship,
With stately bulk, along the heaving tide,
In military pomp, conducts the pow'r
Of some proud navy, bounding from the port,
To bear the vengeance of a mighty state
Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon
They march; when, halting as they take repast,
Across the plain before them, they descry
A troop of Thespians. One above the rest
In eminence precedes. His glittering shield,
Whose gold emblazon'd orb collects the beams
Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne,
Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,
With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,
Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view,
Beneath the radiant honours of his crest,
A countenance of youth, in rosy prime
And manly sweetness, won the fix'd regard
Of each beholder. With a modest grace
He came, respectful, tow'rd the king, and show'd
That all ideas of his own desert
Were sunk in veneration. So the god
Of light salutes his empyreal sire;
When from his altar, in the embowering grove

Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound
Of Tenedos or Claros, where he hears
In hymns his praises from the sons of men,
He reascends the high Olympian seats:
Such reverential homage on his brow,
O'ershading, softens his effulgent bloom
With loveliness and grace. The king receives
The' illustrious Thespian thus—'My willing tongue
Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear
All in thy aspect to become that name,
Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal
Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul
Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend.'
To him the youth—'O bulwark of our weal,
My name is Dithyrambus; which the lips
Of some benevolent, some generous friend,
To thee have sounded in a partial strain,
And thou hast heard with favour. In thy sight
I stand deputed by the Thespian chief,
The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,
Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.
Three days will bring the hostile powers in view.'
He said. The ready standards are uprear'd.
By zeal enforc'd, till evening shadows fall
The march continues; then by day-spring sweeps
The earliest dews. The van by Agis led,
Displays the grisly face of battle, rough
With spears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length
Along the indented way. Beside him march'd
His gallant Thespian host. The centre boasts
Leonidas, the leader, who retains
The good Megistias near him. In the rear
Dieneces commanded, who in charge
Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,

For these instructions—' Let thine eye, young man,
Dwell on the order of our varying march;
As champaign, valley, mountain or defile,
Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus
Conducts not his Barbarians, like the sands
In number. Yet the discipline of Greece
They will encounter, feeble as the sands
Dash'd on a rock, and scatter'd in their fall.'
To him the' inquiring youth—' The martial tread,
The flute's slow warble, both in just accord
Entrance my senses; but let wonder ask,
Why is that tender vehicle of sound
Preferr'd in war by Sparta? other Greeks
To more sonorous music rush in fight.'
' Son of my friend, (Dieneces rejoins)
Well dost thou note. I praise thee. Sparta's law
With human passions, source of human woes,
Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs
Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat
To principle and order. Music too,
By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law;
Still to her plan subservient, melts in notes
Which cool and soothe, not irritate and warm.
Thus, by habitual abstinence applied
To every sense, suppressing nature's fire
By modes of duty, not by ardour sway'd,
O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,
At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.'
' O might I merit a Laconian name!
(The Acarnanian answer'd.) But explain
What is the land we traverse? What the hill,
Whose parted summit in a spacious void
Admits a bed of clouds? And, gracious, tell
Whose are those suits of armour which I see

Borne by two Helots?' At the questions pleas'd,
Dieneces continues—'Those belong
To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot,
They, disencumber'd, all at large precede
This ponderous band. They guide a troop of slaves,
Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,
Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.
This tract is Phocis. That divided hill
Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine
Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death
The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood
A crop will spring of victory to Greece.'
'And these three hundred, high in birth and rank,
All citizens of Sparta'—cries the youth:
'They all must bleed, (Dieneces subjoins)
All, with their leader: so the law decrees.'
To him, with earnest looks, the generous youth—
'Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour
Close to thy buckler? Gratitude will brace
Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force
Of thy instruction.'—'Menalippus, no,'
Return'd the chief; 'Not thou of Spartan breed,
Nor call'd to perish. Thou, unwedded too,
Would'st leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,
Live to enjoy, our solitary fall.
Reply is needless. See, the sun descends.
The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,
Son of Megistias. In my name command
The' attendant Helots to erect our camp.
We pitch our tents in Locris.' Quick the youth
His charge accomplish'd. From a generous meal,
Where, at the call of Alpheus, Locris shower'd
Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,
The sated warriors soon in slumber lose

The memory of toil. His watchful round
Dieneces, with Menalippus, takes.
The moon rode high and clear. Her light benign
To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling show'd,
All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side
Was fenc'd by trees high shadowing. The front
Look'd on a crystal pool, by feather'd tribes
At every dawn frequented. From the springs
A small redundance fed a shallow brook,
O'er smoothest pebbles rippling, just to wake,
Not startle, Silence, and the ear of Night
Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around,
The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep,
Whose drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.
The warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat
Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain
Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.
Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog
Is rous'd. All, heedful of the wonted sound,
Their known conductor follow. Slow behind
The' observing warriors move. Ere long they reach
A broad and verdant circle, thick enclos'd
With birches straight and tall, whose glossy rind
Is clad in silver from Diana's car.
The ground was holy, and the central spot
An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb
Of screening trees, the' external circuit swarm'd
With sheep and beeves, each neighbouring hamlet's wealth
Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,
Whom, by the name of Melibœus hail'd,
A peasant throng surrounded. As their chief,
He, nigh the altar, to his rural friends
Address'd these words; 'O, sent from different lords

With contribution to the public wants,
Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!
Speed to the slow-pac'd ox for once impart;
That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,
We, to our summons true, ere noontide blaze,
May join Oïleus, and his praise obtain!
He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,
Combin'd with bleating notes and tinkling bells,
With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,
Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,
Along the valley, herd and flock are driv'n
Successive; halting oft to harmless spoil
Of flowers and herbage, springing in their sight.
While Melibœus marshall'd with address
The inoffensive host, unseen in shades,
Dieneces applauded, and the youth
Of Menalippus caution'd: 'Let no word
Impede the careful peasant. On his charge
Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid,
He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see
That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands
Our debt to nature.'—On a carpet dry
Of moss, beneath a wholesome beech, they lay,
Arm'd as they were. Their slumber, short, retires
With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,
The troops proceed. The' admiring eye of youth
In Menalippus caught the morning rays,
To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide
Of cultivated hillocks, dales, and lawns;
Where mansions, hamlets interpos'd; where domes
Rose to their gods, through consecrated shades.
He then exclaims: 'O say, can Jove devote
These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames?'
The Spartan answers: 'Ravage, sword, and fire,

Must be endur'd, as incidental ills.
Suffice it these invaders, soon or late,
Will leave this soil, more fertile by their blood,
With spoils abundant to rebuild the fanes.
Precarious benefits are these, thou seest,
So fram'd by heaven; but virtue is a good
No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.'
Beside the public way, an oval fount
Of marble sparkled with a silver spray
Of falling rills, collected from above.
The army halted, and their hollow casques
Dipp'd in the limpid stream. Behind it rose
An edifice, compos'd of native roots,
And oaken trunks, of knotted girth unwrought.
Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd arms,
Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.
These words, engraven on a tablet rude,
Megistias reads; the rest in silence hear.
'Yon marble fountain, by Oïleus plac'd,
To thirsty lips in living water flows;
For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat;
A grateful offering here to rural peace,
His dinted shield, his helmet, he resign'd.
O passenger! if, born to noble deeds,
Thou wouldst obtain perpetual grace from Jove,
Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,
And thy decline to hospitable cares.
Rest here; then seek Oïleus in his vale.'
'O Jove! (burst forth Leonidas) thy grace
Is large and various. Length of days and bliss
To him thou giv'st to me a shorten'd term,
Nor yet less happy. Grateful, we confess
Thy different bounties, measur'd full to both.
Come, let us seek Oïleus in his vale.

The word is given. The heavy phalanx moves.
The light pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,
Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook
Blithe Melibœus in a spacious vale,
The fruitfullest in Locris, ere the sun
Shot forth his noontide beams. On either side
A surface scarce perceptibly ascends.
Luxuriant vegetation crowds the soil
With trees close rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads
Of native fruitage to the sight reveal
Their vigorous nurture. There the flushing peach,
The apple, citron, almond, pear, and date,
Pomegranates, purple mulberry, and fig,
From interlacing branches mix their hues
And scents, the passenger's delight; but leave
In the mid vale a pasture long and large,
Exuberant in vivid verdure, cropp'd
By herds, by flocks, innumerous. Neighbouring knolls
Are speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs
To herdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds,
Once yielded rest unbroken, till the name
Of Xerxes shook their quiet. Yet this day
Was festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,
From toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd
The' enliven'd meadow. Under every shade
A hoary minstrel sat; the maidens danc'd;
Flocks bleated; oxen low'd; the horses neigh'd;
With joy the vale resounded; terror fled;
Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news
By Melibœus, hastening to his lord,
Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd,
While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd—
'In this fair valley old Oïleus dwells,

The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state
The public host. Yon large pavilions mark,
They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,
There tell our charge.' This said, they both advance.
A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd
In rank, in age, superior, wav'd his hand
To Melibœus, standing near, and spake—
' By this my faithful messenger I learn
That you are friends. Nor yet the' invader's foot
Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'ercast by time,
My sight would scarce distinguish friend or foe,
A Grecian or Barbarian.' Alpheus then—
' We come from Lacedæmon, of our king
Leonidas forerunners.'—' Is he nigh?'
The cordial senior tenderly exclaims—
' I am Oïleus. Him a beardless boy
I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years
Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.
But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,
Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.'
They sit. He still discourses—' Spartan guests!
In me an aged soldier you behold.
From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,
Oïlean Ajax, flows my vital stream,
Unmix'd with his presumption. I have borne
The highest functions in the Locrian state,
Not with dishonour. Self-dismiss'd, my age
Hath in this valley on my own demesne
Liv'd tranquil, not recluse. My comrades these,
Old magistrates and warriors, like myself,
Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd
To rural quiet. Through our last remains
Of time in sweet garrulity we slide,
Recounting pass'd atchievements of our prime;

Nor wanting liberal means for liberal deeds;
Here bless'd, here blessing, we reside. These flocks,
These herds and pastures, these our numerous hinds,
And poverty hence exil'd, may divulge
Our generous abundance. We can spread
A banquet for an army. By the state
Once more entreated, we accept a charge,
To age well suited. By our watchful care
The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.'
He scarce had finish'd, when the ensigns broad
Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale
Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound
Of flutes, soft warbling in the' expressive mood
Of Dorian sweetness, unadorn'd. Around,
In notes of welcome, every shepherd tun'd
His sprightly reed. The damsels show'd their hair,
Diversified with flowrets. Garlands gay,
Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dies
Of amaranths, of jasmine, roses, pinks,
And violets, they carry, tripping light
Before the steps of grimly-featur'd Mars,
To blend the smiles of Flora with his frown.
Leonidas they chant in silvan lays,
Him the defender of their meads and groves,
Him, more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.
While Philomela, in her poplar shade,
Awaken'd, strains her emulating throat,
And joins, with liquid trills, the swelling sounds.
Behold, Oïleus and his ancient train
Accost Laconia's king, whose looks and words
Confess remembrance of the Locrian chief.
'Thrice hail, Oïleus, Sparta's noble host!
Thou art of old acquainted with her sons,
Their laws, their manners. Musical as brave,

Train'd to delight, in smooth Terpander's lay,
In Alcman's Dorian measure, we enjoy,
In thy melodious vale, the unlabour'd strains
Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd.
Our heart-felt gladness deems the golden age
Subsisting where thou govern'st. Still these tones
Of joy continued, may thy dwellings hear!
Still may this plenty, unmolested crown
The favour'd district! May thy reverend dust
Have peaceful shelter in thy father's tomb!
Kind heaven, that merit to my sword impart!'
By joy uplifted, forth Oïleus broke—
'Thou dost recall me then! O, sent to guard
These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from shame,
Permit thy wearied soldiers to partake
Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,
Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.'
The hero full of dignity and years,
Once bold in action, placid now in ease,
Ev'n by his look, benignly cast around,
Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,
With heart-effus'd complacency, the king
Accepts the liberal welcome; while his troops,
To relaxation and repast dismiss'd,
Pitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.
Still is the evening. Under chesnut shades,
With interweaving poplars, spacious stands
A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,
The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind
On sage discourse; which thus Oïleus clos'd—
'Behold, night lifts her signal, to invoke
That friendly god who owns the drowsy wand.
To Mercury this last libation flows.
Farewell till morn.' They separate, they sleep;

All but Oïleus, who forsakes the tent.
On Melibœus in these words he calls—
'Approach, my faithful friend.' To him the swain—
'Thy bondman hears thy call.' The chief replies
Loud, for the gathering peasantry to heed—
'Come, Melibœus, it is surely time
That my repeated gift, the name of friend,
Thou shouldst accept. The name of bondman wounds
My ear. Be free. No longer best of men,
Reject that boon; nor let my feeble head,
To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,
Descend and sleep unthankful in the grave.
Though yielding Nature daily feels decay,
Thou dost prevent all care. The gods estrange
Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast
From weeds, too oft in aged soils profuse,
From self-tormenting petulance and pride,
From jealousy and envy at the fame
Of younger men. Leonidas will dim
My former lustre, as that silver orb
Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice,
O Melibœus, these elect of Jove
To certain death advance. Immortal powers!
How social, how endearing is their speech!
How flow in liberal cheerfulness their hearts!
To such a period verging, men like these
Age well may envy, and that envy take
The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span
Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain
Each earthly joy. Till blest Elysium spread
Her ever blooming, inexhausted stores
To their glad sight, be mine the grateful task
To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves

Our vessels large of well fermented wine,
From all our granaries lift the treasur'd corn.
Go, load the groaning axles. Nor forget
With garments new to greet Melissa's nymphs.
To her a triple change of vestments bear,
With twenty lambs and twenty speckled kids.
Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid
Him, your director, others to select
Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,
Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,
When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.'
They heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil
Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts
A ready car. The coursers had enroll'd
His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.
By moon-light, floating on the splendid reins,
He, o'er the busy vale intent, is borne
From place to place; o'erlooks, directs, forgets
That he is old. Meantime, the shades of night,
Retiring, wake Dieneces. He gives
The word. His pupil seconds. Every band
Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears.
Oïleus greets him. In his radiant car
The senior stays, reluctant; but his guest
So wills, in Spartan reverence to age.
Then spake the Locrian: 'To assist thy camp
A chosen band of peasants I detach.
I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care;
Nor doubt that swain.' Oïleus, speaking, look'd
On Melibœus: 'Skilful he commands
These hinds. Him wise, him faithful, I have prov'd,
More than Eumæus to Laertes' son.
To him the' Œtæan woods, their devious tracks,
Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass

Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,
My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,
Well exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells
On Œta: sage Melissa she is call'd;
Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.
She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend
An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.
Now, servants, bring the sacred wine.' Obey'd,
He from his seat uprising, thus proceeds—
'Lo! from this chalice a libation pure
To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,
To their protector, eleutherian Jove,
To his nine daughters, who record the brave,
To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;
And take an old man's benediction too.'
He stopt. Affection, struggling in his heart,
Burst forth again—'Illustrious guest, afford
Another hour! That slender space of time
Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,
Already glittering down the dewy vale,
File through its narrow'd outlet, near my side
Deign to be carried, and my talk endure.'
The king, well pleas'd, ascends. Slow move the steeds
Behind the rear. Oïleus grasps his hand,
Then, in the fulness of his soul, pursues—
'Thy veneration for Laconia's laws
That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,
Hear me display the melancholy fruits
Of lawless will. When o'er the Lidian plains
The' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,
His vassal, Pythius, who in affluent means
Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince
Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host,

And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king
Refusing, ev'n augmented from his own.
An act of fancy, not habitual grace,
A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom
Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd
To march from Sardis, when with humble tears
The good old man besought him—" Let the king,
Propitious, hear a parent! in thy train
I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,
Thy future vassal, to sustain my age!"
The tyrant fell replied—" Presumptuous man,
Who art my slave, in this tremendous war
Is not my person hazarded, my race,
My consort? Former merit saves from death
Four of thy offspring. Him, so dearly priz'd,
Thy folly hath destroy'd." His body straight
Was hewn asunder. By the public way
On either side a bleeding half was cast,
And millions pass'd between. O, Spartan king!
Taught to revere the sanctity of laws,
The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,
His fame with thine. The curses of mankind
Give him renown. He marches to destroy,
But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,
Each eminence is loaded thick with crowds,
From cots, from every hamlet pour'd abroad,
To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.'
Ofttimes the king his decent brow inclin'd,
Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,
Which through the' instructed ear unceasing flow'd,
In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour
Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind.
A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile
Of military fame. A trophy large,

Compact with crested morions, targets rude,
With spears and corselets, dimm'd by eating age,
Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,
Of circular expanse; whose bosom show'd
A green-slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,
And from its centre lifting high to view
A marble chapel, on the massy strength
Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought frieze
Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp
Of obelisks, and busts, and storied urns,
Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead
Were scatter'd round, o'ercast with shadows black
Of yew and cypress. In a serious note
Oïleus, pointing, opens new discourse—
'Beneath yon turf my ancestors repose.
Oïlean Ajax singly was depriv'd
Of funeral honours there. With impious lust
He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulf
Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,
That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,
By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd.
Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,
The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.
A race more pious on the' Oïlean house
Felicity have drawn. To every god
I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan.
Once, on the margin of that silent pool,
In their nocturnal camp, Barbarians lay,
Awaiting morn to violate the dead.
My youth was fir'd. I summon'd, from their cots,
A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan,
Assail'd the' unguarded ruffians in his name.
He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.
Not one surviv'd the fury of our swains.

Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose,
Of costly blocks constructed; hence that fane,
Inscrib'd to Pan the' armipotent. O King!
Be to an old man's vanity benign.
This frowning emblem of terrific war
Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.
This, to Barbarian strangers entering Greece,
Shows what I was. The marble fount thou saw'st
Of living water, whose transparent flow
Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,
The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,
Show what I am; to Grecian neighbours show
The hospitality of age. O age!
Where are thy graces, but in liberal deeds,
In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks
Lose the deformity of time? Let smiles
Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth,
Thy feeble steps will find'—— Abruptly here
He paus'd. A manly warrior, full in sight,
Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,
Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd
His reverend host—' Thou pausest. Let me ask,
Whom do I see, resembling in his form
A demigod?' In transport then the sage—
' It is my son, discover'd by his shield,
Thy brave auxiliar, Medon! He sustains
My ancient honours in his native state,
Which kindly chose my offspring to replace
Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!
My life, a tide of joy, which never knew
A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark
Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail,
My long and happy course should finish here.'
The chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,

Saluting thus Leonidas—‘ O king
Of warlike Sparta! Xerxes' host in sight
Begin to spread their multitude, and fill
The spacious Malian plain.’ The king replies—
‘ Accept, illustrious messenger, my thanks.
With such a brave assistant, as the son
Of great Oïleus, more assur'd I go
To face those numbers.’ With his godlike friend
The father, now dismounting from his car,
Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark
They all are wafted to the island-fane,
Erected by Oïleus, and enrich'd
With his engrav'd atchievements. Thence the eye
Of Sparta's general, in extensive scope,
Contemplates each battalion as they wind
Along the pool; whose limpid face reflects
Their weapons, glistening in the early sun.
Them he to Pan armipotent commends,
His favour thus invoking—‘ God, whose power,
By rumour vain, or echo's empty voice,
Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,
Can disarray whole armies; smile on these
Thy worshippers! Thy own Arcadians guard!
Through thee Oïleus triumph'd. On his Son,
On me, look down. Our shields auxiliar join
Against profane Barbarians, who insult
The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall
Of this thy shrine.’ He said, and now, intent
To leave the island, on Oïleus call'd.
‘ He, (Medon answer'd) by his joy and zeal
Too high transported, and discoursing long,
Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down
Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd
Amid thy pious commerce with the god,

Was silently remov'd. The good old chief
On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,
Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.'
  His hastening step Leonidas restrains;
Thus fervent prays—' O Maia's son! best pleas'd
When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,
Watch o'er my venerable friend! thy balm
He wants, exhausted by his love to me.
Sweet sleep, thou softenest that intruding pang
Which generous breasts, so parting, must admit.'
  He said, embark'd, relanded. To his side
Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the host.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ about noon, on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is received by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Œta. He is answered by Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismissed by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incensed at the arrogance of Tigranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes, after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibœus, a faithful slave of Oïlens, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ for the defence of another pass in mount Œta.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK III.

Now in the van Leonidas appears,
With Medon still conferring. ‘ Hast thou heard,
(He said) among the' innumerable foes,
What chiefs are most distinguish'd ?'—‘ Might we trust
To fame, (replied the Locrian) Xerxes boasts
His ablest, bravest, counsellor and chief,
In Artemisia, Caria's matchless queen.
To old Darius benefits had bound
Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell'd,
Except by magnanimity, she leads
The best appointed squadron of his fleet.
No female softness Artemisia knows,
But in maternal love. Her widow'd hand
With equity and firmness for her Son
Administers the sway. Of Doric race
She still retains the spirit, which from Greece
Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs
Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,
Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supplied,
Not less than Demaratus, once her king,
An exile now.' Leonidas rejoins—
‘ Son of Oïleus, like thy father wise,
Like him partake my confidence. Thy words
Recal an era, saddening all my thoughts.

That injur'd Spartan shar'd the regal sway
With one—Alas! my brother, eldest-born,
Unbless'd by nature, favour'd by no god,
Cleomenes! Insanity of mind,
Malignant passions, impious acts deform'd
A life concluded by his own fell hand.
Against his colleague, envious, he suborn'd
Leutychides. Him perjury and fraud
Plac'd on the seat, by Demaratus held
Unstain'd in lustre.' Here Oïleus' son—
'My future service only can repay
Thy confidential friendship. Let us close
The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.'—
Each face in transport glows. Now Œta rear'd
His towering forehead. With impatient steps
On rush'd the phalanx, sounding pæans high;
As if the present deity of Fame
Had from the summit shown her dazzling form,
With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
Her adamantine trumpet in her hand,
To celebrate their valour. From the van
Leonidas advances, like the sun,
When through dividing clouds his presence stays
Their sweeping rack, and stills the clamorous wind.
The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan
The air no longer. Motionless their spears.
His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,
Which thus find utterance from his eager lips—
'All hail, Thermopylæ, and you, the powers
Presiding here! All hail, ye silvan gods!
Ye fountain-nymphs! who send your lucid rills
In broken murmurs down the rugged steep;
Receive us, O benignant, and support
The cause of Greece! Conceal the secret paths

Which o'er these crags, and through these forests, wind,
Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone
By your immortal footsteps! O defend
Your own recesses, nor let impious war
Profane the solemn silence of your groves!
Then on your hills your praises shall you hear
From those, whose deeds shall tell the' approving world,
That not to undeservers did ye grant
Your high protection. You, my valiant friends,
Now rouse the generous spirit which inflames
Your hearts; exert the vigour of your arms;
That in the bosoms of the brave and free
Your memorable actions may survive;
May sound delightful in the ear of time,
Long as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,
Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops
So near to Heaven, your monuments of fame!'
As in some torrid region, where the head
Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load,
If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark
Invade the parching ground, a sudden blaze
Sweeps o'er the crackling champaign; through his host,
Not with less swiftness, to the furthest ranks
The words of great Leonidas diffus'd
A more than mortal fervour. Every heart
Distends with thoughts of glory, such as raise
The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire,
When danger most tremendous in his form,
Seems in their sight most lovely. On their minds
Imagination pictures all the scenes

Of war; the purple field, the heaps of dead,
The glittering trophy, pil'd with Persian arms.
But lo! the Grecian leaders, who before
Were stationed near Thermopylæ, salute
Laconia's king. The Thespian chief, allied
To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks;
An ancient warrior. From behind his casque,
Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,
The slender hairs, all silver'd o'er by time,
Flow'd venerable down. He thus began—
'Joy now shall crown the period of my days;
And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep,
Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,
Our common parent, be it as the gods
Shall best determine. For the present hour
I bless their bounty, which hath given my age
To see the brave Leonidas, and bid
That hero welcome on this glorious shore,
To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.'
Here too the crafty Anaxander spake—
'Of all the Thebans, we, rejoicing, hail
The king of Sparta! We obey'd his call.
O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes
A darkening veil extend! or those alone
By fame be curs'd, whose impious counsels turn
Their countrymen from virtue! Thebes was sunk,
Her glory buried in dishonest sloth.
To wake her languor generous Alpheus came,
The messenger of freedom. O accept
Our grateful hearts! Thou, Alpheus, art the cause
That Anaxander from his native gates
Not single joins this host; nor tamely these,
My chosen friends, behind their walls remain.

Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,
This loftiest part of Œta. This o'erlooks
The straits, and far beyond their northern mouth
Extends our sight across the Malian plain.
Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,
Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath
marchi'd.'

Disguis'd in seeming worth, he ended here.
The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd,
By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue,
His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd
To grace perfidious counsels, and to clothe
In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,
Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,
Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came.
Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,
The Theban chiefs, and nightly councils held
How to betray the Spartans, or deject
By consternation. Up the arduous slope
With him each leader to the summit climbs:
Thence a tremendous prospect they command,
Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,
Spread like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,
No rock, no promontory, stops the sight,
Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon,
Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb
Surveys the' interminate expanse, and throws
Her rays abroad, to deck in snowy light
The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;
A power unrivall'd by the mightiest king,
Or fiercest conqueror, whose blood-thirsty pride,
Dissolving all the sacred ties which bind
The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd
The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.

Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes,
The towers of Memphis, and those pregnant fields
Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd
Around Sesostris; who with trophies fill'd
The vanquish'd east; who o'er the rapid foam
Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad
Of Ganges, sent his formidable name.
Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds
E'er met such numbers; not when Ninus led
The' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates
Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd
Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her streets,
The rage of dire Semiramis they bore
Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left
His blood-stain'd current turbid with their dead.
Yet of the chiefs, contemplating this scene,
Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand;
The' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes
They traverse; while, in meditation, near
The treacherous Malian waits, collecting all
His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r;
Nor yet with falsehood arms his fraudful tongue
To feign a tale of terror. Truth, herself,
Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance,
Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay
Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd
By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live
From liberty divorc'd. Requested soon,
He breaks his artful silence: 'Greeks and friends,
Can I behold my native Malian fields,
Presenting hostile millions to your sight,
And not in grief suppress the horrid tale
Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips?
On Thracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;

Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,
A mighty bridge restrain'd the' outrageous waves,
And stemm'd the impetuous current; while in arms
The universal progeny of men
Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood
By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,
Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files
From Æthiopia, Egypt's tawny sons,
Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength
Of Asia and of Libya. Neptune groan'd
Beneath their number, and, indignant, heav'd
His neck against the' incumbent weight. In vain
The violence of Eurus and the North,
With rage combin'd, against the' unyielding pile
Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world
Seven days and nights uninterrupted pass
To cover Thracia's regions. They accept
A Persian lord. They range their hardy race
Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,
The brave Thessalian horse, with every Greek
Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,
Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods!
Who in a moment, by thy will supreme,
Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,
Canst raise the weak to safety, oh impart
Thy instant succour! Interpose thy arm!
With lightning blast their standards! Oh, confound,
With triple-bolted thunder, Asia's tents,
Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour
An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks!
Resistance else were vain, against a host
Which overspreads Thessalia. Far beyond
That Malian champaign, stretching wide below,
Beyond the utmost measure of the sight

From this aspiring cliff, the hostile camp
Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd
The beds of copious rivers with their thirst;
Who with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.'
'Then we shall give them battle in the shade;'
Dieneces replied. Not calmly thus
Diomedon. On Persia's camp he bent
His louring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er,
Then fierce exclaim'd—'Bellona! turn, and view
With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage
By regal madness for thy rage prepar'd
To exercise its horrors! Whet thy teeth,
Voracious death! All Asia is thy prey.
Contagion, famine, and the Grecian sword,
For thy insatiate hunger will provide
Variety of carnage.' He concludes:
While on the host immense his cloudy brow
Is fix'd, disdainful, and their strength defies.
Meantime, an eastern herald down the pass
Was seen, slow-moving tow'rds the Phocian wall.
From Asia's monarch delegated, came
Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill
Leonidas conducts the' impatient chiefs.
By them environ'd, in his tent he sits;
Where thus Tigranes their attention calls—
'Ambassadors from Persia's king, we stand
Before you, Grecians! To display the pow'r
Of our great master were a needless task.
The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,
Invincible, exalted on a throne
Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd
To every clime, and every heart impress'd
With awe and low submission. Yet I swear,
By yon refulgent orb which flames above,

The glorious symbol of eternal pow'r,
This military throng, this show of war,
Well nigh persuade me you have never heard
That name, at whose commanding sound the banks
Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,
The' Egyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge,
Obedient roll. O impotent and rash!
Whom yet the large beneficence of Heaven,
And heavenly Xerxes, merciful and kind,
Deign to preserve; resign your arms! Disperse
All to your cities! There let humblest hands
With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.'
As through the' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs,
Entwining, crown some eminence with shade,
The tempests rush sonorous, and between
The crashing branches roar: by fierce disdain,
By indignation, thus the Grecians, rous'd,
In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech.
But every tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's king
This brief reply deliver'd from his seat—
'O Persian! when to Xerxes thou return'st,
Say thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r.
Then say, thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,
Which dares his boasted millions to the field.'
He adds no more. The' ambassadors retire.
Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines
Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.
In slow solemnity they all proceed,
And sullen silence; but their looks denote
Far more than speech could utter. Wrath contracts
The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth
Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.
Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd

The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face
Of either Persian, arrogance, incens'd
By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost strait
They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents
Of Asia, there discovering wide to view
Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the heart
Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,
Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase—
'O Arimanius! origin of ill,
Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r,
Thus with the curse of madness to afflict
These wretched men? But, since thy dreadful ire
To irresistible perdition dooms
The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.
Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall;
Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood.'
Enrag'd the stern Diomedon replies—
'Thou base dependant on a lawless king,
Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know,
That I beheld the Marathonian field?
Where, like the Libyan sands before the wind,
Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears?
Where thou, perhaps by ignominious flight,
Didst from this arm protect thy shivering limbs?
O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight!
Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie,
To dogs a banquet.'—With uplifted palms,
Tigranes then—'Omnipotent support
Of sceptred Xerxes, Horomazes, hear!
To thee his first victorious fruits of war
Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils,
Which from this Grecian, by the rising dawn,
In sight of either host, my strength shall rend.'
At length Phraortes, interposing, spake—

'I too would find, among the Grecian chiefs,
One who in battle dares abide my lance.'
The gallant youth of Thespia swift replied—
'Thou look'st on me, O Persian! Worthier far
Thou migh'st have singled from the ranks of Greece;
Not one more willing to essay thy force.
Yes, I will prove, before the eye of Mars,
How far the prowess of her meanest chief
Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.'
This said, the Persians to their king repair:
Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find
Each soldier poising his extended spear,
His weighty buckler bracing on his arm,
In warlike preparation. Through the files
Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,
By exhortation, aids their native warmth.
Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd,
Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake—
'What has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,
Alas! in vain attempting to confound
The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires,
See how their bosoms glow. They wish to die;
They wait impatient for the' unequal fight.
Too soon the' insuperable foes will spread
Promiscuous havoc round, and Thebans share
The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass
Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach
In our behalf? that Xerxes may be warn'd
To spare his friends amid the general wreck;
When his high-swoln resentment, like a flood
Increas'd by stormy showers, shall cover Greece
With desolation.' Epialtes here—
'Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair?
Is there a path on Œta's hills unknown

To Epialtes? Over trackless rocks,
Through mazy woods, my secret steps can pass.
Farewell! I go. Thy merit shall be told
To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour;
When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.'
Meantime a weary, comprehensive care,
To every part Leonidas extends;
As in the human frame through every vein,
And artery minute, the ruling heart
Its vital powers disperses. In his tent
The prudent chief of Locris he consults;
He summons Melibœus by the voice
Of Agis. In humility not mean,
By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,
The' ingenuous swain, by all the' illustrious house
Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,
Who gracions spake—'The confidence bestow'd,
The praise by sage Oïleus might suffice
To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,
Have found thee skilful, active, and discreet.
Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,
The upper straits, the Phocian camp, explore.'
'O condescension! (Melibœus then)
More ornamental to the great than gems,
A purple robe, or diadem! The king
Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.
Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.
Oïleus will rejoice, and, smiling, say
An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.'
He leads the way, while Agis, following, spake—
'O swain, distinguish'd by a liberal mind,
Who were thy parents? Where thy place of birth?
What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house?
Oïleus sure thy liberty would grant,

Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace;
When in a station equal to thy worth
Thou may'st be rank'd.' The prudent hind began—
'In different stations different virtues dwell,
All reaping different benefits. The great
In dignity and honours meet reward,
For acts of bounty and heroic toils.
A servant's merit is obedience, truth,
Fidelity; his recompense, content.
Be not offended at my words, O chief!
They, who are free, with envy may behold
This bondman of Oïleus. To his trust,
His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r,
From his pure model, could not fail to mould
What thou entitlest 'liberal.' Whence I came,
Or who my parents, is to me unknown.
In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold:
They took their price; they hush'd the' atrocious deed.
Dear to Oïleus and his race, I throve;
And, whether noble or ignoble born,
I am contented, studious of their love
Alone. Ye sons of Sparta! I admire
Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own
To their condition; happy in my lord,
Himself of men most happy.' Agis bland
Rejoins: 'O born with talents to become
A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,
Thou dost the more deserve! Laconia's king
Discerns thy merit through its modest veil.
Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.
Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine!
But, should the state demand thee, I foresee

Thou wouldst, like others, in the field excel,
Wouldst share in glory.' Blithe return'd the swain—
'Not every service is confin'd to arms.
Thou shalt behold me in my present state
Not useless. If the charge Oïleus gave,
I can accomplish; meriting his praise
And thy esteem, my glory will be full.'
Both pleas'd, in converse thus pursue their way,
Where Œta lifts her summits huge to heav'n
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd,
Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,
Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears
A call of welcome. There his course he stays.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Tigranes and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his satraps, in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but, by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot, to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs, and manners. He advances to the entrance of the straits, and, surprised at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus: which occasions a conversation between them, on the mercenary forces of Persia and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylæ. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chooses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and, on her departure to the Persian camp, is surprised by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of mount Œta.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IV.

The plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune lav'd.
The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,
Which open channels to pellucid streams,
In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame,
Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,
Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face
Of this broad champaign, numberless, are pitch'd
Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood
To rich Thessalia's confines they extend.
They fill the vallies, late profusely bless'd
In nature's varied beauties. Hostile spears
Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.
Pale die her flowrets under barbarous feet.
Embracing ivy from its rock is torn.
The lawn, dismantled of its verdure, fades.
The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,
Leave desolate the stream. Elaborate domes,
To heaven devoted in recesses green,
Had felt rude force, insensible and blind
To elegance and art. The statues, busts,
The figur'd vases, mutilated, lie,
With chisel'd columns, their engraven frieze,
Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.

Yet, unpolluted, is a part reserv'd
In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot
Of Aleuadian princes, who, allies
To Xerxes, reign'd in Thessaly. There glow
Inviolate the shrubs. There branch the trees,
Sons of the forest. Over downy moss
Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,
There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine-roofs,
Wind to retreats delectable, to grots,
To silvan structures, bowers, and cooling dells,
Enliven'd all, and musical, with birds
Of vocal sweetness, in relucent plumes
Innumerably various. Lulling falls
Of liquid crystal, from perennial founts,
Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen,
The noble dames of Persia; here the train
Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,
In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,
Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,
A tranquil station. Ariana here,
Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung,
Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills
Her drooping forehead. Love-afflicted fair!
All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs
To her sad ear. From flowers and florid plants,
To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes,
Transmit no pleasure. Sedulous in vain,
Her tender slaves, in harmony, with lutes
Of soothing sound, their warbled voices blend
To charm her sadness. This, the precious part
Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge;
A satrap, long experienc'd, who presides
O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,
Bold, resolute, and faithful, he commands

The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise
The distant navy, dancing on the foam,
The' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,
With Xerxes' tent, august in structure, plac'd
A central object, to attract the eyes
Of subject millions: thither now resort
Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find
Enclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,
The potentates of Asia. Near his side
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,
His gallant brothers; with Mazæus brave,
Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords!
Their sceptred master from his radiant seat
Looks down, imperious. So the stately tower
Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow
With heaven's bright azure, from on high survey'd
The huge extent of Babylon, with all
Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.
This day his banners to unfurl in Greece
The monarch's will decides; but first ordains
That grateful hymns should celebrate the name
Of Horomazes: so the Persians call'd
The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white,
The Magi rang'd before the' unfolded tent.
Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rds the sacred flame
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heaven.
From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd,
Who on the hills of Persia, from his cave,
By flowers environ'd, and melodious founts,
Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd
How Horomazes, radiant source of good,
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe
In fruitfulness and beauty: how with stars
By him the heavens were spangled: how the sun,

Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light
And genial warmth, whence teeming Nature smiles,
Burst from the east at his creating voice;
When, straight beyond the golden verge of day,
Night show'd the horrors of her distant reign,
Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,
The author foul of evil: how with shades
From his dire mansion he deform'd the works
Of Horomazes: turn'd to noxious heat
The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch;
That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds;
Whence pestilence and famine: how the power
Of Horomazes in the human breast
Benevolence and equity infus'd,
Truth, temperance, and wisdom, sprung from heaven:
When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul
With falsehood and injustice, with desires
Insatiable, with violence and rage,
Malignity and folly. If the hand
Of Horomazes on precarious life
Sheds wealth and pleasure, swift the' infernal god,
With wild access or avarice, blasts the joy.
Thou, Horomazes, victory dost give.
By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.
Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms
The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd
The Hellespont, thou o'er its chafing breast
The destin'd master of the world didst lead,
This day his promis'd glories to enjoy:
When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend;
Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall
Before thy might, and evil be no more.
The Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold,

From her tall ship, between a double row
Of naval warriors, while a golden ray
Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.
In her enrich'd accoutrements of war,
The full-wrought buckler and high-crested helm,
In Caria first devis'd, across the beach
Her towering form advances. So the pine,
From Taurus hewn, mature in spiry pride,
Now by the sailor, in its canvass wings,
Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dress'd,
On Artemisia's own imperial deck
Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove
Of crowded masts surrounding. In her heart
Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,
Who fill with impious vanity their king;
As when he lash'd the Hellespont with rods,
Amid the billows cast a golden chain
To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe
Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd
On her young son, who, pacing near in arms
Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,
Look'd up, and waken'd, by repeated smiles,
Maternal fondness, melting in that eye
Which scoul'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat
At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes,
Invited; while in adoration bow'd
Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay:
Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,
As from a present deity, too bright
For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes.
At length, in abject phrase, Tigranes thus—
'O Xerxes, live for ever! Gracious lord,
Who dost permit thy servants to approach
Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess

Thy majesty and radiance! May the power
Of Horomazes stretch thy regal arm
O'er endless nations, from the Indian shores
To those wide floods which beat Iberian strands,
From northern Tanais to the source of Nile!
Still from thy head may Arimanius bend
Against thy foes his malice! Yonder Greeks,
Already smit with frenzy by his wrath,
Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They choose
To magnify thy glory by their fall.'
The monarch, turning to his brothers, spake—
'Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe
These tidings? Sure these slaves have never dar'd
To face the Grecians, but delude our ears
With base impostures, which their fear suggests.'
He frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm replied—
'O from his servants may the king avert
His indignation! Greece was fam'd of old
For martial spirit and a dauntless breed.
I once have tried their valour. To my words
Abrocomes can witness. When thy sire
And ours, Darius, to Athenian shores,
With Artaphernes brave and Datis, sent
Our tender youth, at Marathon we found
How weak the hope that numbers could dismay
A foe, resolv'd on victory or death.
Yet not as one contemptible, or base,
Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks
With such persisting courage be endued,
Soon as the king shall summon to the field,
He shall behold me in the dangerous van
Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,
Or sink beneath them.' Xerxes swift rejoin'd—
'Why over Asia, and the Libyan soil,

With all their nations, doth my potent arm
Extend its sceptre? Wherefore do I sweep
Across the earth with millions in my train?
Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails?
Why all this power, unless the' Almighty's will
Decreed one master to the subject-world;
And that the earth's extremity alone
Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd
The Nile's revolted sons, enlarg'd my sway
With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime
Of Æthiopia. He for this subdued
The Hellespontic foam, and taught the sea
Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more
That heaven, deserting my imperial cause,
With courage more than human will inspire
Yon despicable Grecians, and expunge
The common fears of nature from their breasts.'
The monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began—
'The king commands us to reveal our thoughts.
Incredulous he hears. But time and truth
Not Horomazes can arrest. Thy beams
To instant lightning, Mythra, mayst thou change
For my destruction; may the' offended king
Frown on his servant; cast a loathing eye,
If the assertion of my lips be false:
Our further march those Grecians will oppose.'
Amid the' encircling peers Argestes sat,
A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,
Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves
Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,
Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute pay'd
To this great satrap. Through the servile court
Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts

Of mean submission; none more skill'd to gain
The royal favour; none who better knew
The phrase, the look, the gesture, of a slave;
None more detesting Artemisia's worth;
By her none more despis'd. His master's eye
He caught, then spake—'Display thy dazzling state,
Thou deity of Asia! Greece will hide
Before thy presence her dejected face.'
Last Artemisia, rising stern, began—
'Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,
Unprofitably wasting precious hours
In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,
Rang'd in defence of that important pass,
Will fight or fly? a question by the sword
To be decided. Still to narrow straits,
By land, by sea, thy council hath confin'd
Each enterprise of war. In numbers weak,
Twice have the' Athenians in Eubœa's frith
Repuls'd thy navy. But, whate'er thy will,
Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king
The difference see, by trial in the field,
Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve
These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.
The future stage of war thyself explore:
Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,
That such a foe to splendour will submit,
Whom steel, not gold, must vanquish. Thou provide
Thy mail, Argestes. Not in silken robes,
Not as in council with an oily tongue,
But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,
Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.'

The king arose: 'No more! Prepare my car.
The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.
We will ourselves advance to view the foe.'
The monarch will'd, and suddenly he heard
His trampling horses. High on silver wheels
The ivory-car with azure sapphires shone,
Cærulean beryls, and the jasper green,
The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush,
The flaming topaz with its golden beam,
The pearl, the' empurpled amethyst, and all
The various gems, which India's mines afford
To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold
A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd
His stately neck, and o'er the royal head
Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight generous steeds,
Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd
In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.
Not those of old to Hercules refus'd
By false Laomedon; nor they which bore
The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear
Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vie
In strength or beauty. In obedient pride
They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air
They toss their foreheads. On their glistening chests
The silver manes disport. The king ascends.
Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.
The charioteer now shakes the' effulgent reins
Strong Patiramphes. At the signal, bound
The' attentive steeds; the chariot flies; behind,
Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field,
Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain
Of vast expansion, in battalia wait

The eastern bands. To these the' imperial wheels,
By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,
Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son
With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach
Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.
He now draws nigh. The' innumerable host
Roll back by nations, and admit their lord,
With all his satraps. As from crystal domes,
Built underneath an arch of pendant seas,
When that stern power, whose trident rules the floods,
With each cerulean deity ascends,
Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep
Divides its bosom to the' emerging god:
So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,
On either side receding: when, as down
The' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost,
A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,
While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears;
That, soon as time a hundred years had told,
Not one among those millions should survive!
Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud?
Was it that once humanity could touch
A tyrant's breast? Or rather, did thy soul
Repine, O Xerxes! at the bitter thought
That all thy power was mortal?—But the veil
Of sadness soon forsook his brightening eye,
As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,
And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.
Elate, the mingled prospect he surveys
Of glittering files, unnumber'd; chariots, scyth'd,
On thundering axles roll'd; and haughty steeds,
In sumptuous trappings clad: Barbaric pomp!
While gorgeous banners to the sun expand

Their streaming volumes of relucent gold,
Pre-eminent, amidst tiaras gemm'd,
Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears
In number equal to the bladed grass,
Whose living green in vernal beauty clothes
Thessalia's vale. What powers of sounding verse
Can to the mind present the' amazing scene?
Not thee, whom rumour's fabling voice delights,
Poetic fancy, to my aid I call;
But thou, historic truth, support my song,
Which shall the various multitude display,
Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.
The Persians first in scaly corselets shone;
A generous nation, worthy to enjoy
The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,
Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength
Of Babylon and Sardis. Power advanc'd
The victor's head above his country's laws.
Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth;
Their limbs inur'd to every manly toil,
To brace the bow, to rule the' impetuous steed,
To dart the javelin; but, untaught to form
The ranks of war, with unconnected force,
With ineffectual fortitude, they rush'd,
As on a fence of adamant, to pierce
The' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,
And osier-woven targets, they oppos'd
To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields.
On every head tiaras rose like towers,
Impenetrable. With golden gloss
Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins
Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,
Well-furnish'd quivers, on their shoulders, hung;
And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.

Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,
The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once
From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject East.
Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd.
The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,
From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,
And white with lilies, water'd by the floods
Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave
The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings.
All other streams the royal lip disdains.
Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime,
Dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,
To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,
Bent by its foodful burdens, sheds, unreap'd,
Its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil
With future harvests; whilst in every wood
Their precious labours on the loaden boughs
The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons
Display their brazen casques, unskilful work
Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,
O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks,
Within the mighty Babylonian gates,
They dwell; and where still mightier once in sway,
Old Ninus rear'd its head, the' imperial seat
Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldæa joins,
The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide
There Belus first discern'd the various course
Of heaven's bright planets, and the clustering stars,
With names distinguish'd; whence himself was deem'd
The first of gods. His sky-ascending fane
In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.
Drawn from the bounteous soil, by Ochus lav'd,
The Bactrians stood, and, rough in skins of goats,

The Paricanian archers, Caspian ranks,
From barren mountains, from the joyless coast
Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,
Their scimitars upheld, and cany bows.
The Indian tribes a threefold host compose.
Part guide the courser, part the rapid car;
The rest on foot within the bending cane,
For slaughter, fix the iron-pointed reed.
They, o'er the Indus from the distant verge
Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd
By lavish nature. There the season bland
Bestows a double harvest. Honey'd shrubs,
The cinnamon, the spikenard, bless their fields.
Array'd in native wealth, each warrior shines.
His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,
Encircled, wear a bracelet, starr'd with jems.
Such were the nations who to Xerxes sent
Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.
Now, Muse, recite what multitudes obscur'd
The plain on foot, or elevated high,
On martial axles or on camels, beat
The loosen'd mould. The Parthians first appear,
Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,
From woods, nor yet for warlike steeds renown'd.
Near them the Sodgians, Dadices, arrange,
Gandarians and Chorasmians. Sacian throngs
From cold Iamus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,
From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,
A bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,
To fury prone, their deserts they forsook.
A bow, a falchion, and a ponderous axe,
The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque
O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone.
In arms like Persians, the Saranges stood.

High as their knees, the shapely buskins clung
Around their legs. Magnificent they trod,
In garments richly tinctur'd, Next are seen
The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train,
In skins of goats rude vested. But in spoils
Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards,
The graceful range of Æthiopians shows
An equal stature, and a beauteous frame.
Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,
And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song
Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,
As foes to virtue. From their seat remote,
On Nilus' verge above the' Egyptian bound,
Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,
These friends of hospitality and peace,
Themselves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war
Against a land, whose climate and whose name
To them were strange. With hardest stone they point
The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,
Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,
They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd
With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd
From where Carambis, with projected brows,
O'erlooks the dusky Euxin, wrapt in mists;
From where, through flowers which paint his varied banks,
Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands succeed;
The Matienians, Mariandenians, next;
To them the Syrian multitudes, who range
Among the cedars on the shaded ridge
Of Libanus; who cultivate the glebe,
Wide-water'd by Orontes; who reside
Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded palms

The foodful date, which clusters on the plains
Of rich Damascus. All, who bear the name
Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,
With those who gather from the fragrant shrub
The aromatic balsam, and extract
Its milky juice along the lovely side
Of Jordan, winding, till immers'd he sleeps
Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures
The' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance;
To them their ancient colony are join'd,
Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts
Of strong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,
Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain;
Whence, with collected waters, fierce and deep,
His passage rending through diminish'd rocks,
To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream
Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides;
He, stealing imperceptibly, sustains
The green profusion of Armenia's meads.
Now, strange to view, in similar attire,
But far unlike in manners, to the Greeks,
Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport
Were all their care. Beside Cäyster's brink,
Or smooth Mæander, winding silent by;
Beside Pactolean waves, among the vines
Of Tmolus rising, or the wealthy tide
Of golden-sanded Hermus, they allure
The sight enchanted by the graceful dance;
Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,
And melt to softest languishment the soul.
What to the field of danger could incite
These tender sons of luxury? The lash
Of their fell Sovereign drove their shivering backs
Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main

And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile,
Conjoining Asia and the western world.
To them Mœonia, hot with sulphurous mines,
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,
Unbless'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil;
Black are the rocks; and every hill deform'd
By conflagration. Helmets press their brows:
Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests
A swort is girt; and hairy hides compose
Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left
Olympus wood-envelop'd; left the meads
Wash'd by Caïcus, and the baneful tide
Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance
An ancient nation, who in early times,
By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land
Esteem'd less dear than freedom, and exchang'd
Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours
A freezing current, for the distant flood
Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,
Their habitation to the sacred feet
Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan
Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn
On Sangar now, as once on Strymon, lost.
The ruddy skins of foxes cloth'd their heads.
Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon.
A vest embrac'd their bodies; while abroad,
Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.
But other Thracians, who their former name
Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,
With horns of bulls, in imitating brass,
Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phœnician cloth
Their legs infolded. Wont to chase the wolf,
A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still
On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,

Their huge array discovering, swell his soul
With more than mortal pride? The cluster'd bands
Of Moschians and Macronians now appear;
The Mosynœcians, who, on berries fed,
In wooden towers along the Pontic sands
Repose their painted limbs. The mirthful race
Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds
Delight in play and laughter. Then advance,
In garments buckled on their spacious chests,
A people destin'd in eternal verse,
Ev'n thine, sublime Mœonides, to live.
These are the Milyans; Solymi their name
In thy celestial strains; Pisidia's hills
Their dwelling. Once a formidable train,
They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war:
Now, doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,
Themselves unnerv'd by thraldom, they must leave
Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.
The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,
Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,
A dreary waste of sands, which mock the toil
Of patient culture; save one favour'd spot,
Which from the wild emerges like an isle,
Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines
Of generous nurture, yielding juice which scorns
The injuries of time: yet nature's hand
Had sown their rocks with coral; had enrich'd
Their desart-hills with veins of sapphires blue,
Which on the turban shine. On every neck
The coral blushes through the numerous throng.
The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,
Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion small.
Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood;
Their lances short; of hides undress'd their shields

The Colchians march'd from Phasis; from the strand
Where once Medea, fair enchantress, stood,
And, wondering, view'd the first adventrous keel
Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's side
The demigods descended. They repair'd
To her fell sire's inhospitable hall.
His blooming graces Jason there disclos'd:
With every art of eloquence divine
He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard;
She gaz'd in fatal ravishment, and lov'd:
Then to the hero she resigns her heart.
Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.
She lulls the sleepless dragon. O'er the main
He wafts the golden prize, and generous Fair,
The destin'd victim of his treacherous vows!
The hostile Colchians then pursued their flight
In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,
Or to recall the long-forgotten wrong,
Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece
With desolation. Next, in Median garb
A crowd appear'd, who left the peopled isles
In Persia's gulf, and round Arabia strewn.
Some in their native topaz were adorn'd,
From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung;
Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood
Around Casitis' verge. For battle range
Those who reside where, all beset with palms,
Erythras lies entomb'd a potent king,
Who nam'd of old the Erythræan main.
On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat, array'd
In skins terrific, brandishing their darts
Of wood, well-temper'd in the hardening flames.
Not Libya's deserts from tyrannic sway
Could hide her sons; much less could freedom dwell

Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields;
Where spicy Cassia, where the fragrant reed,
Where myrrh and hallow'd frankincense, perfume
The zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size
The' Arabian carries: o'er his lucid vest
Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.
Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs
Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.
Such were the numbers which, from Asia led,
In base prostration bow'd before the wheels
Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more
The Malian sand o'ershadow? Forward rolls
The regal car through nations, who in arms,
In order'd ranks, unlike the orient tribes,
Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught
To bend the servile knee, erect they stood;
Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight
Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,
Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons
Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force
Had gather'd round his standards. Murmuring here,
The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd;
Here, on his steed, the brave Thessalian frown'd;
There pin'd reluctant multitudes of Greece,
Redundant plants, in colonies dispers'd
Between Byzantium and the Malian bay.
Through all the nations, who ador'd his pride
Or fear'd his power, the monarch now was pass'd;
Nor yet among those millions could be found
One, who in beauteous features might compare,
Or towering size, with Xerxes. O! possess'd
Of all but virtue, doom'd to show how mean,
How weak, without her is unbounded power!

The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state,
How insecure of happiness! how vain!
Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, by heaven
From none withheld, which oft to thousands proves
Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;
Which in consuming sickness, age, or pain,
Becomes at last a soothing hope to all:
Thou, who couldst weep that Nature's gentle hand
Should lay her wearied offspring in the tomb;
Yet couldst remorseless, from their peaceful seats
Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride,
To famine, plague, and massacre a prey;
What didst thou merit from the injur'd world?
What sufferings, to compensate for the tears
Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,
For all this waste of nature? On his host
The' exulting monarch bends his haughty sight,
To Demaratus then directs his voice—
'My father, great Darius, to thy mind
Recall, O Spartan! Gracious he receiv'd
Thy wandering steps, expell'd their native home.
My favour too remember. To beguile
Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth,
Would ill become thee. With considerate eyes
Look back on these battalions. Now declare
If yonder Grecians will oppose their march.'
To him the exile—'Deem not, mighty lord,
I will deceive thy goodness by a tale,
To give them glory who degraded mine.
Nor be the king offended while I use
The voice of truth: the Spartans never fly.'
Contemptuous smil'd the monarch, and resum'd—
'Wilt thou, in Lacedæmon once supreme,

Encounter twenty Persians? Yet these Greeks
In greater disproportion must engage
Our host to-morrow.' Demaratus then—
'By single combat were the trial vain
To show the power of well-united force,
Which oft by military skill surmounts
The weight of numbers. Prince, the difference learn
Between thy warriors and the sons of Greece.
The flower, the safeguard, of thy numerous camp
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls;
Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak
By their laborious axe. Their watchful eyes
Observe not how the flocks and heifers feed.
To them, of wealth, of all possessions, void,
The name of country with an empty sound
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,
Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn
Rejecting labour; wretched by their wants,
Yet profligate through indolence; with limbs
Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt,
From misery, debauchery, and sloth;
Are these to battle drawn against a foe
Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,
Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil,
Wont through the freezing shower, the wintry storm,
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,
Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow
Beneath the burden of his yellow sheaves;
Whence on himself, on her whose faithful arms
Infold him joyful, on a growing race
Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows

With independence. When to battle call'd,
For them, his dearest comfort and his care,
And for the harvest promis'd to his toil,
He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force.
Such are the troops of every state in Greece.
One only yields a breed more warlike still,
Of whom selected bands appear in sight,
All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe
Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf.
They are devoted to severer tasks,
For war alone, their sole delight and care.
From infancy to manhood they are train'd
To winter-watches, to inclement skies,
To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar,
To arms and wounds; a discipline of pain
So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp,
With all its hardships, is a seat of rest,
And war itself remission from their toil.'

'Thy words are folly; (with redoubled scorn
Returns the monarch:) Doth not freedom dwell
Among the Spartans? Therefore will they shun
Superior foes. The unrestrain'd and free
Will fly from danger; while my vassals, born
To absolute controlment from their king,
Know, if the' allotted station they desert,
The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.'

To this the exile—'O conceive not, prince!
That Spartans want an object where to fix
Their eyes in reverence, in obedient dread.
To them more awful, than the name of king
To Asia's trembling millions, is the law;
Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront
Unnumber'd foes; to vanquish, or to die.'

Here Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts.

Its long defile Thermopylæ presents.
The satraps leave their cars. On foot they form
A splendid orb around their lord. By chance
The Spartans then compos'd the' external guard.
They, in a martial exercise employ'd,
Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train;
But poise the spear, protended, as in fight;
Or lift their adverse shields in single strife;
Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel
In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet:
While others, calm, beneath their polish'd helms
Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls
O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here
The exile questions—'What do these intend,
Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair?'
To whom the Spartan—'O imperial lord!
Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,
When full determin'd to encounter death.
Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel;
Arm, if thou canst, the general race of man,
All who possess the regions unexplor'd
Beyond the Ganges, all whose wandering steps
Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild,
With those who drink the secret fount of Nile;
Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay
Remain a stranger.' Fervour from his lips
Thus breaks aloud; when, gushing from his eyes,
Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside
His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.
The keen remembrance of his former state,
His dignity, his greatness, and the sight
Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,
And spread amazement through the world in arms,
Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks

Review the godlike warriors, who beneath
His standard once victorious fought; who call'd
Him once their king, their leader: then again,
O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears
His reverend beard; in agony bemoans
His faded honours, his illustrious name,
Forgotten long; his majesty, defil'd
By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd
By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,
Some princely palace, or stupendous fane,
Magnificent in ruin, nods; where time
From under shelving architraves hath mow'd
The column down, and cleft the ponderous dome.
Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd
The' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own
He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane—
'O Demaratus! in this grief I see
How just thy praises of Laconia's state.
Though cherish'd here with universal love,
Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,
Howe'er averse to thine. But swift relief
From indignation borrow. Call to mind
Thy injuries. The' auspicious fortune bless,
Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,
To peace, to honour, in the Persian court.'
As Demaratus, with a grateful mind,
His answer was preparing, Persia's king
Stern interrupted—'Soon as morning shines,
Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, lead
The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians
bound.'
This said, the monarch to his camp returns.
The' attendant princes reascend their cars,
Save Hiperanthes, by the Carian queen

Detain'd, who thus began—' Impartial, brave,
Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart
To thee its feelings undisguis'd reveal.
Thou hear'st thy royal brother. He demands
These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate there?
Why not command the mountains to remove,
Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,
Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die
My gratitude instructs me in the cause
Of our imperial master. To succeed
Is not within the shadow of my hopes
At this dire pass. What evil genius sways?
Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest,
In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd
My dictates, oft repeated in despite
Of purpled flatterers, to embark a force,
Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine
These sons of valour to their own defence.
Vain are my words. The royal ear admits
Their sound alone; while adulation's notes
In siren-sweetness penetrate his heart,
There lodge, ensnaring mischief.' In a sigh
To her the prince—' O faithful to thy lord,
Discreet adviser, and in action firm,
What can I answer? My afflicted soul
Must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.
Thou mayst be partial to thy Doric race,
Mayst magnify our danger. Let me hope,
Whate'er the danger; if extreme, believe
That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed
Not with less zeal than Spartans for their laws.'
They separate. To Xerxes he repairs,
The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard,

Stays, and retraces with sagacious ken
The destin'd field of war, the varied space,
Its depth, its confines, both of hill and sea.
Meantime a scene more splendid hath allur'd
Her son's attention. His transported sight,
With ecstasy like worship, long pursues
The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,
Which show'd their idol to the nations round,
The bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,
The plumes, the chariots, standards. He excites
Her care, express'd in these pathetic strains—
'Look on the king with gratitude. His sire
Protected thine. Himself upholds our state.
By loyalty inflexible repay
The obligation. To immortal powers
The adoration of thy soul confine;
And look undazzled on the pomp of man,
Most weak when highest. Then the jealous gods
Watch to supplant him. They his paths, his courts,
His chambers, fill with flattery's poisonous swarms,
Whose honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd,
Consumes the health of kingdoms.' Here the boy,
By an attention which surpass'd his years,
Unlocks her inmost bosom: 'Thrice accurs'd
Be those, (the' indignant heroine pursues)
Those, who have tempted their imperial lord
To that preposterous arrogance, which cast
Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,
Chastis'd with stripes in heaven's offended sight
The Hellespont, and fondly now demands
The Spartans bound. O child, my soul's delight!
Train'd by my care to equitable sway,
And imitation of the gods, by deeds
To merit their protection, heed my voice.

They, who alone can tame or swell the floods,
Compose the winds, or guide their strong career,
O'erwhelming human greatness, will confound
Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet
Their indignation hath already fall'n.
Perhaps our boasted army is prepar'd
A prey for death, to vindicate their power.'
This said, a curious search in every part
Her eye renews. Adjoining to the straits,
Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining shrubs,
A seeming fence to some sequester'd ground,
By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards
Address'd their spears to part the pliant boughs.
Held back, they yield a passage to the queen
And princely boy. Delicious to their sight,
Soft dales, meandering, show their flowery laps
Among rude piles of nature. In their sides
Of rock are mansions hewn; nor loaden trees
Of cluster'd fruit are wanting: but no sound,
Except of brooks in murmur, and the song
Of winged warblers, meets the listening ear.
No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form,
Is seen; no careful husband at his toil;
Beside her threshold no industrious wife,
No playful child. Instructive to her son
The princess then—'Already these abodes
Are desolate. Once happy in their homes,
The' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene
Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars
Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs,
And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits,
Unripe; will deafen, with his clangor fell,
Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,

Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains! plant,
Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here.
Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust
To Demaratus; while thy mother tries,
With these her martial followers, what sparks,
Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame
Their sons and daughters in a stern debate
With other Dorians, who have never breath'd
The softening gales of Asia, never bow'd
In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.
Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks
Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight
Were too severe a lesson. Thou might'st bleed
Among the thousands fated to expire
By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,
Ye all-disposing rulers! but protect
Her son.' She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns
Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,
And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,
Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.
Now slowly tow'rds the Persian camp her steps
In silence she directed; when a voice,
Sent from a rock, accessible which seem'd
To none but feather'd passengers of air,
By this reproof detain'd her—'Caria's queen,
Art thou to Greece by Doric blood allied?
Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste,
Thou homager of tyrants?'—Upward gaz'd
The' astonish'd princess. Lo! a female shape,
Tall and majestic, from the' impendent ridge
Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound
Her graceful hair, loose flowing. Seldom wept
Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear

Between her eyelids gleam'd. 'Too true, (she sigh'd)
A homager of tyrants! Voice austere,
And presence half-divine!' Again the voice—
'O Artemisia! hide thy Doric sword.
Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,
Thy counsels, valiant as thou art and wise,
Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,
Subvert the laws of Greece, her sons inthrall.'
The queen made no reply. Her breastplate heav'd.
The tremulous attire of covering mail
Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd—
'Olympian thunderer! from thy neighbouring hill,
Of sacred oaths remind me!' Then aside
She turns, to shun that majesty of form,
In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts
She feels. A painful conflict she endures,
With recollection of her Doric race;
Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.
Her royal benefactor she recalls,
Back to his sight precipitates her steps.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence which Agis and Melibœus bring from the upper pass; then commands a body of Arcadians, with the Platæans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle under the conduct of Demophilus in that part of Thermopylæ which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repulsed by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains, in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery; but, pacified by Demaratus, is accompanied by him with a thousand horse to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulture.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK V.

Aurora dawn'd. Leonidas arose.
With Melibœus, Agis, now return'd,
Address'd the king—' Along the mountain's side
We bent our journey. On our way a voice,
Loud from a crag, on Melibœus call'd.
He look'd and answer'd: ' Mycon, ancient friend!
Far hast thou driven thy bearded train to-day;
But fortunate thy presence. None like thee,
Inhabitant of Œta from thy birth,
Can furnish that intelligence which Greece
Wants for her safety.' Mycon show'd a track.
We mounted high. The summit, where we stopt,
Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,
O'er dales, and forests, rocks, and dashing floods
In cataracts. The object of our search
Beneath us lay, the secret path to Greece,
Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.
We thence descended to the Phocian camp,
Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread
In height and shade; on whose sustaining boughs
Were hung, in snowy folds, a thousand tents
Containing each a Phocian, heavy-mail'd,
With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends
The vale, contracted to that narrow strait

Which first we saw with Mycon.'—' Prudent care
Like yours alleviates mine; (well-pleas'd the king
Replied:) Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands
Select a thousand spears. To them unite
The Thespians and Platæans. Draw their lines
Beneath the wall which fortifies the pass.
There, close-embodied, will their might repulse
The numerous foe. Demophilus salute.
Approv'd in martial service, him I name
The chief supreme.' Obedient to his will,
The' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents,
Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.
So round their monarch, in his stormy hall,
The winds assemble. From his dusky throne
His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims
To swell the main, or heaven with clouds deform,
Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.
Laconia's leader, from the rampart's height,
To battle thus the listening host inflames—
' This day, O Grecians, countrymen, and friends!
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats,
Your parents, country, liberty, and laws,
Demand your swords. You, generous, active, brave,
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,
In war unskilful, nature's basest dross,
And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.
Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd
By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire, their cause;
Their only fruit of victory is spoil.
They know not freedom, nor its liberal cares.
Such is the flower of Asia's host. The rest,
Who fill her boasted numbers, are a crowd
Forc'd from their homes; a populace, in peace

By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war
Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief
To bear the rapine, cruelty, and spurns,
Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine
In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds
The trumpet's clangor in their trembling ears.
Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance,
Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present
The mockery of war.—But every eye
Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts
Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.
Go then, ye sons of liberty! go, sweep
These bondmen from the field. Resistless, rend
The glittering standard from their servile grasp.
Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,
The warrior's helm profaning. Think the shades
Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows,
Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.'
He spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.
In fierce reply, Barbarian shouts ascend
From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.
Such is the roar of Ætna, when his mouth
Displodes combustion from his sulphurous depths,
To blast the smiles of natnre. Dauntless stood,
In deep array before the Phocian wall
The phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,
And spears protended: like the graceful range
Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs
Before some rural palace wide expand
Their venerable umbrage, to retard
The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main,
In lucid rows, the rising waves reflect
The sun's effulgence; so the Grecian helms

Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd
A splendor, scatter'd through the dancing plumes.
Down rush the foes. Exulting, in their van
Their haughty leader shakes his threatening lance,
Provoking battle. Instant from his rank
Diomedon bursts, furious. On he strides;
Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies—
'Now art thou met, Barbarian! Wouldst thou prove
Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command
Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.'
Tigranes, turning to the Persians, spake—
'My friends and soldiers, check your martial haste,
While my strong lance that Grecian's pride confounds.'
He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon
Each combatant advanc'd. Their sinewy hands
Grip'd fast their spears, high-brandish'd. Thrice they drove,
With well-directed force, the' appointed steel
At either's throat, and thrice their wary shields
Repell'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief
At length, with powers collected for the stroke,
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.
Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns
Approaching fate; then all his martial skill
Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear
Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths:
The blade descending on Tigranes' arm,
That instant struggling to redeem his lance,
The nervous hand dissevers. Pale affright
Unmans the Persian; while his active foe
Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,

Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.
Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.
His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides;
Then, in a tuft of blood-distilling hair
His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk
The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength
Among the adverse legions. All in dread
Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew
In sanguine circles, and pursued its track
Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,
A barbarous nation, whom the cheerful dawn
Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high
A meteor, waving its portentous fires;
Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams,
Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,
Dispersing plague and desolation round.
Awhile the stern Diomedon remain'd
Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze
The heart of Persia; then, with haughty pace,
In sullen joy, among his gladsome friends
Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng,
In consternation motionless, suspend
The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms—
'Heav'n! can one leader's fate appal this host,
Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?
Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge
I draw my subject files. My hardy toil
Through pathless woods and deserts hath explor'd
The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand
Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.
So through this field of slaughter will I chase
Yon vaunting Greek.' His ardent words revive
Declining valour in the van. His lance

Then in the rear he brandishes. The crowd,
Before his threatening ire affrighted, roll
Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.
Thus, with his trident, ocean's angry god
From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass
Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach.
Tremendous frown'd the fierce Platæan chief,
Full in the battle's front. His ample shield,
Like a strong bulwark, prominent he rais'd
Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm
Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train
In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.
Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,
Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,
Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon
Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest
The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host
Shrunk back, as blasted by the piercing beams
Of that unconquerable sword which fell
With lightening's swiftness on dissever'd helms,
And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all,
Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,
Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd
With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends—
'O Dithyrambus! let thy deeds this day
Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms,
Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recall.
Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.
Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame
Smiles on thy years. She grants thy aged hand
To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow.'
As, when endued with Promethean heat,
The molten clay respir'd, a sudden warmth
Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins;

In every sinew new-born vigour swells.
His falchion, thundering on Cherasmes' helm,
The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war
Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates
He, proud in hope, her swarming numbers led.
Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,
His martial brothers. They attend his fate,
By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary sire
Shall o'er his solitary palace roam;
Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse
Ambition's fury, and the lust of war;
Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave.
Next, by the fierce Platæan's fatal sword,
Expir'd Damates, once the host and friend
Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight,
He left his native bands. Of Syrian birth,
In Daphné he resided, near the grove
Whose hospitable laurels, in their shade,
Conceal'd the virgin fugitive, averse
To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd,
Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,
Herself a laurel, chang'd her golden hair
To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove
Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,
Fann'd by the breath of zephyrs, and with rills
From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast,
The happy rival of Thessalia's vale;
Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.
Demophilus, wise leader, soon improves
Advantage. All the veterans of his troop,
In age his equals, to condense the files,
To rivet close their bucklers, he commands.
As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,
But well compacted, when a favouring gale

Invites the skilful master to expand
The sails at large, her slow but steady course
Impels through myriads of dividing waves;
So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs
The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons
Pursued more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd
The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,
Crush'd, like vile stubble underneath the steps
Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields
Of new-shorn harvest. On the general rout
Phraortes look'd intrepid still. He sprang
O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe:
His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd—
'Fly then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.
Yet, single, here my target shall oppose
The shock of thousands.' Raging, he impels
His deathful point through Aristander's breast.
Him Dithyrambus lov'd: a sacred bard,
Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd;
He sung the deeds of heroes; those who fell,
Or those who conquer'd, in their country's cause;
The' enraptur'd soul inspiring with the love
Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high strain
The Muses favour'd from their neighbouring bow'rs,
And bless'd with heavenly melody his lyre.
No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend
The shady steep of Helicon; no more
The stream divine of Aganippe's fount
Bedew his lip, harmonious; nor his hands,
Which, dying, grasp the unforsaken lance,
And prostrate buckler, ever more accord
His lofty numbers to the sounding shell.
Lo! Dythyrambus weeps! Amid the rage
Of war and conquest, swiftly-gushing tears

Find one sad moment's interval to fall
On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves
His stern revenge. Through shield and corselet plung'd,
His forceful blade divides the Persian's chest;
Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd
From ancestors who sway'd in Ninus old
The' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne
A tributary satrap, rul'd the vales
Where Tigris swift, between the parted hills
Of tall Niphates, drew his foamy tide,
Impregnating the meads. Phraortes sinks,
Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes
Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.
Beyond the Malian entrance of the straits
The' Arcadians rush; when, unperceiv'd till felt,
Spring, from concealment in a thicket deep,
New swarms of warriors, clustering on the flank
Of these unwary Grecians. Tow'rds the bay
They shrink:—they totter on the fearful edge,
Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,
The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk
Beneath the chieftain of the' assailing band
Falls prostrate. Thespians and Platæans wave
Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes
Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.
Dire is the shock. What less than Caria's queen,
In their career of victory, could check
Such warriors? Fierce she struggles; while the rout
Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp
Contagious terror; thence no succour flows.
Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band
At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit
He leaves to others, like the' almighty sire

Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods,
His instruments of wrath, o'erwhelm the earth,
And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth
Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding crowd,
Platæa's chief and Dithyrambus range,
Triumphant, side by side. Thus o'er the field
Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,
And concave hoof along his echoing banks,
Two generous coursers, link'd in mutual reins,
In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal.
The' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,
They press the Carian rear. Not long the queen
Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans
Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs
She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs.
A troop she rallies. Goddess-like, she turns,
Not less than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.
Whole ranks she covers, like the' imperial bird,
Extending o'er a nest of callow young
Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak,
Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent hand,
From common lives refraining, hastes to snatch
More splendid laurels from that nobler head.
His ponderous falchion, swift descending, bears
Her buckler down; thence glancing, cuts the thong
Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence
Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose
A female-warrior; one, whose summer pride
Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,
Yet by the' heroic character supplied,
Which grew more awful, as the touch of time
Remov'd the softening graces. Back he steps,

Unman'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,
Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands
Full on his crest discharge the furious blade.
The forceful blow compels him to recede
Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.
His soldiers flock around him. From a scene
Of blood more distant speeds Platæa's chief.
The fair occasion of suspended fight
She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,
And saves her Carian remnant. While his friend
In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake—
'If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.
Be all thy trophies, be my own, acurs'd.'
The youth, recover'd, answers in a smile—
'I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd
The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.
Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.
Let us prevent his call.' This said, their steps
They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps
Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore
Distain'd; like two grim tigers, who have forc'd
A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd
By some lone-wandering traveller, then, dy'd
In human crimson, through the forest deep
Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.
Stern Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,
Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look
She casts around. Abrocomes remote
With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.
She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,
Who from battalions numberless had spar'd
Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd
With her distress. Her anger now augments.
Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow.

He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat
High on his car. She follows. Lost her helm;
Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,
Wild, but majestic, like the waving boughs
Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,
And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield
With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen,
All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds,
Her bleeding soldiers. Brandishing her sword,
To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks—
'Behold these mangled Carians, who have spent
Their vital current in the king's defence,
Ev'n in his sight; while Medes and Cissians fled,
By these protected, whom Argestes saw
Pursued by slaughter to thy very camp,
Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling sire!
Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove,
To thee appealing, of the king I claim
A day for justice. Monarch, to my arm
Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth
Chastise his treason.' With an eye submiss,
A mien obsequious, and a soothing tone,
To cheat the king, to moderate her ire,
Argestes utters these fallacious words—
'May Horomazes leave the fiend at large
To blast my earthly happiness, confine
Amid the horrors of his own abode
My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge
Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint,
My sole restraint! To him our all is due;
Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd!
His preservation I prefer to fame,
And bright occasion for immortal deeds
Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword,

Fair heroine of Asia! hadst thou seen
Among the foremost blazing. Lo! the king
A royal present will on thee bestow,
Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,
A golden wreath to each survivor brave.'
  Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatterer's spell
Deluded, languid through dismay and shame
At his defeat, the monarch for a time
Sat mute, at length unlock'd his faltering lips—
  'Thou hear'st, great princess! Rest content: his words
I ratify. Yet, farther, I proclaim
Thee of my train first counsellor and chief.'
  'O eagle-ey'd discernment in the king!
O wisdom equal to his boundless power!
(The purple sycophant exclaims:—) Thou seest
Her matchless talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,
The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments;
Foil'd in her absence, in her conduct safe.
Thy penetrating sight directs the field;
There let her worth be hazarded no more.'
  'Thy words are wise; (the blinded prince rejoins:)
Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.'
  Thus, to remove her from the royal ear,
Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage
Swells in her bosom. Demaratus sees,
And calms the storm, by rendering up his charge
To her maternal hand. Her son, belov'd,
Dispels the furies. Then the Spartan thus—
  'O Artemisia! of the king's command
Be thou observant. To thy slaughter'd friends
Immediate care, far other than revenge,
Is due. The ravens gather. From his nest
Among those clifts, the eagle's rapid flight

Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek,
Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead.
Depart; thy guide is piety. Collect,
For honourable sepulchres prepare,
Those bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.
I will assist thee. Xerxes will intrust
To my command a chosen guard of horse.'
As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercast
The night with double darkness, only pierc'd
By heaven's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,
The orient sun, diffusing genial warmth,
Refines the troubled air; the blast is mute;
Death-pointed flames disperse; and placid Jove
Looks down in smiles: so prudence from the lips
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,
His aspect strengthening smooth persuasion's flow,
Compos'd her spirit. She with him departs.
The king assigns a thousand horse to guard
The' illustrious exile and heroic dame.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Grecian commanders, after the pursuit, retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of Mount Œta. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus, discovering a passage through it, ascends to the temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Melissa, the daughter of Oïleus, she intrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deputes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces first engaged, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own request, to continue in the field with the Platæans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylæ, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Platæans, Mantineans, Tegæans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliasians, and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light armed troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the son of Oïleus Dieneces commands the whole.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VI.

Now Dithyrambus and Platæa's chief,
Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd
Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield,
Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their sight.
To him in pity Thespia's gallant youth,
Approaching, thus his generous soul express'd—
'Liv'st thou brave Persian? By propitious Jove!
From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows
Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic'd,
When fortune bless'd with victory my arm,
Than now to raise thee from this field of death.'
His languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,
Then with expiring voice—'Vain man, forbear
To proffer me what soon thyself must crave.
The day is quite extinguish'd in these orbs.
One moment fate allows me to disdain
Thy mercy, Grecian! Now I yield to death.'
This effort made, the haughty spirit fled.
So shoots a meteor's transitory gleam
Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds,
Then dissipates for ever. O'er the corse
His reverend face Demophilus inclin'd,
Pois'd on his lance, and thus addressed the slain—
'Alas! how glorious were that bleeding breast,
Had justice brac'd the buckler on thy arm,

And to preserve a people bade thee die!
Who now shall mourn thee? Thy ungrateful king
Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land
May raise an empty monument, but feel
No public sorrow. Thy recorded name
Shall wake among thy countrymen no sighs
For their lost hero. What to them avail'd
Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard
Their wives, their offspring, from the' oppressor's hand,
But to extend oppression, didst thou fall;
Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy soul,
Which but thy froward destiny forbade,
By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.
All-bounteous Nature! thy impartial laws
To no selected race of men confine
The sense of glory, fortitude, and all
The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,
And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st
In every soil. But freedom, like the sun,
Must warm the generous seeds. By her alone
They bloom, they flourish; while oppression blasts
The tender virtues: hence a spurious growth,
False honour, savage valour, taint the soul,
And wild ambition: hence rapacious power
The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave,
A feast for dogs, the ensanguin'd field bestrew.'
He said. Around the' venerable man
The warriors throng'd, attentive. Conquest hush'd
Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,
Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm.
So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew
To Hebrus' margin, from their dreary seats,
The savage breed which Hæmus, wrapt in clouds,

Pangæus cold, and Rodopean snows,
In blood and discord nurs'd the soothing strain
Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,
Their fierceness melted; and, amaz'd, they learn'd
The sacred laws of justice, which the bard
Mix'd with the music of his heavenly string.
Meantime the' Arcadians, with inverted arms
And banners, sad and solemn, on their shields
The giant limbs of Clonius bore along,
To spread a general woe. The noble corse,
Dire spectacle of carnage! passing by
To those last honours which the dead partake,
Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye
Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine;
Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd
Intent, and spake—'My heart retains thy words.
This hour may witness how rapacious power
The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more!
But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire
A signal tomb. This gallant Persian, crush'd
Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood, still warm,
May lie forgotten by his thankless king;
Yet not by me neglected shall remain
A naked corse.' The good old man replies—
'My generous child, deserving that success
Thy arm hath gain'd? When vital breath is fled,
Our friends, our foes, are equal dust. Both claim
The funeral passage to that future seat
Of being, where no enmity revives.
There Greek and Persian will together quaff,
In amaranthine bowers, the cup of bliss
Immortal. Him thy valour slew on earth,
In that bless'd region thou mayst find a friend.'
This said, the ready Thespians he commands

To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,
The' empurpled rock. Outstretch'd, on targets broad,
Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane,
He follows Clonius to the funeral pyre.
A cave not distant from the Phocian wall,
Through Œta's cloven side, had Nature form'd,
In spacious windings. This in moss she clad;
O'er half the entrance, downward from the roots,
She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,
To heaven's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth
Reluctent laurels spread before the sun
A broad and vivid foliage. High above
The hill was darken'd by a solemn shade,
Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave
Diomedon, Demophilus resort,
And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,
Cool as the azure grot where Thetis sleeps
Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds
Of waters, trilling from the riven stone
To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,
In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,
Allure the warriors, hot with toil and thirst,
To this retreat serene. Against the sides
Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields;
The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks;
Propt on their spears, they rest: when Agis brings
From Lacedæmon's leader these commands—
'Leonidas recals you from your toils,
Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd
The first bright harvest on the field of fame.
Our eyes in wonder, from the Phocian wall,
On your unequall'd deeds incessant gaz'd.'
To whom Platæa's chief—'Go, Agis, say

To Lacedæmon's ruler that, untir'd,
Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,
Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.
Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,
Shall not this early sun again behold
The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,
Should they adventure on a fresh assault?'
To him the Thespian youth—'My friend, my guide
To noble actions, since thy generous heart,
Intent on fame, disdains to rest, O grant
I too thy glorious labours may partake,
May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.
Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king, entreat
Not to command us from the field of war.'
'Yes, persevering heroes, (he replied)
I will return, will Sparta's king entreat
Not to command you from the field of war.'
Then interpos'd Demophilus—'O friend,
Who leadst to conquest brave Platæa's sons;
Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man,
Who dost restore a brother to my eyes;
My soul your magnanimity applauds:
But, O reflect that unabating toil
Subdues the mightiest! Valour will repine
When the weak hand obeys the heart no more.
Yet I declining through the weight of years,
Will not assign a measure to your strength.
If still you find your vigour undecay'd,
Stay, and augment your glory. So, when time
Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside,
When in the temples your enfeebled arms
Have hung their consecrated shields, the land
Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,

Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,
Requite the generous labours of your prime.'
So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.
But from the fount Diomedon receives
The' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,
Addressing thus the genius of the stream—
'Whoe'er thou art, divinity unstain'd
Of this fair fountain! till unsparing Mars
Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy streams
To me, who ill repay thee. I again
Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,
Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Malian slime.'
He said, and lifted in his brimming casque
The bright refreshing moisture. Thus repairs
The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,
Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood
Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp
Had roam'd, unheeding, in the secret shade;
Rapacious o'er the humid brink he stoops,
And in the pure and fluid crystal cools
His reeking jaws. Meantime the Thespian's eye
Roves round the vaulted space; when sudden sounds
Of music, utter'd by melodious harps
And melting voices, distant, but in tones
By distance soften'd, while the echoes sigh'd
In lulling replication, fill the vault
With harmony. In admiration mute,
With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,
Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes
The balm of sleep relaxes, and his wings
Fall from his languid side. Platæa's chief,
Observing, rous'd the warrior: 'Son of Mars!
Shall music's softness from thy bosom steal

The sense of glory? From his neighbouring camp
Perhaps the Persian sends fresh nations down.
Soon in bright steel Thermopylæ will blaze.
Awake! Accustom'd to the clang of arms,
Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,
My ear, my spirit, in this hour admit
No new sensation, nor a change of thought.'
The Thespian, starting from oblivious sloth
Of ravishment and wonder, quick replied—
'These sounds were more than human. Hark!
Again!
O honour'd friend, no adverse banner streams
In sight. No shout proclaims the Persian freed
From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge
In this mysterious dwelling of the nymphs,
Whose voices charm its gloom.' In smiles rejoin'd
Diomedon—'I see thy soul inthrall'd.
Me thou wouldst rank among the' unletter'd rout
Of yon Barbarians, should I press thy stay.
Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd,
We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.
Here will I wait, a sentinel unmov'd,
To watch thy coming.' In exploring haste
The' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.
He finds it bounded by a steep ascent
Of rugged steps; where, down the hollow rock,
A modulation clear, distinct, and slow,
In movement solemn, from a lyric string,
Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord
With these sonorous lays: 'Celestial maids!
While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,
We celebrate our heroes, O impart
Orphean magic to the pious strain!
That from the mountain we may call the groves;

Swift motion through these marble fragments
breathe,
To overleap the high Œtæan ridge,
And crush the fell invaders of our peace.'
The animated hero upward springs,
Light as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd
In subterraneous cavities, at length
Pervading, rives the surface, to enlarge
The long imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,
He sees, he stands abash'd, then reverent kneels.
An aged temple, with insculptur'd forms
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train
Of nine bright virgins, round their priestess rang'd,
Who stood in awful majesty, receive
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord
In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage,
Whose elevated port and aspect rose
To more than mortal dignity, her lyre
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,
Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair
Shades his inclining forehead; while a flush
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.
Her pensive visage softens to a smile
On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts—
'I should reprove thee, inadvertent youth,
Who, through the sole access by nature left
To this pure mansion, with intruding steps
Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword
Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene
Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.
What is the impress on thy warlike shield?'
'A golden eagle on my shield I bear,'
Still bending low, he answers. She pursues—

'Art thou possessor of that glorious orb,
By me distinguish'd in the late defeat
Of Asia, driven before thee? Speak thy name.
Who is thy sire? Where lies thy native seat?
Com'st thou for glory to this fatal spot,
Or from Barbarian violence to guard
A parent's age, a spouse, and tender babes,
Who call thee father?' Humbly he again—
'I am of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,
The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,
He to his brother, and my second sire,
Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons
By him are led. His dictates I obey;
Him to resemble strive. No infant voice
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow
I am a stranger, and among the Greeks
The least entitled to thy partial praise.'
'None more entitled, (interpos'd the dame)
Deserving hero! thy demeanor speaks,
It justifies the fame, so widely spread,
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride
Of that fair city, which the Muses love,
Thee an accepted visitant I hail
In this their ancient temple! Thou shalt view
Their sacred haunts.' Descending from the dome,
She thus pursues—'First, know my youthful hours
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muse
To daily meditation won my soul,
With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks
Of her own rapture. By a father sage
Conducted; cities, manners, men I saw,
Their institutes and customs. I return'd.
The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain
The holy function here. Now throw thy sight

Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades
Wave in the breeze, and glisten in the sun
Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train
Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty, spar'd
From this surrounding wilderness. Remark
That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flowers;
Shrubs of my culture, flowers by Iris dress'd.
Nor pass that smiling concave in the hill,
Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight
By figs and grapes.' She pauses, while around
His eye, delighted, roves; in more delight
Soon to the spot returning, where she stood
A deity in semblance, o'er the place
Presiding awful, as Minerva wise,
August like Juno, like Diana pure,
But not more pure than fair. The beauteous lake,
The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,
The multifarious glow on Flora's lap,
Lose all attraction, as her gracious lips
Resume their tale—'In solitude remote
Here I have dwelt contemplative, serene.
Oft through the rocks, responsive to my lyre,
Oft to the' Amphictyons in assembly full,
When at this shrine their annual vows they pay,
In measur'd declamation I repeat
The praise of Greece, her liberty and laws.
From me the hinds, who tend their wandering goats
In these rude purlieus, modulate their pipes
To smoother cadence. Justice from my tongue
Dissentious calms, which ev'en in deserts rend
The' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war
My careful thoughts engages, which delight
To help the free, the' oppressor to confound.
Thy feet auspicious fortune hither brings.

In thee a noble messenger I find.
Go, in these words Leonidas address—
'Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,
By their behests invites thy honour'd feet
To her divine abode. Thee, first of Greeks,
To conference of high import she calls.'
The' obedient Thespian down the holy cave
Returns. His swiftness suddenly prevents
His friend's impatience, who salutes him thus—
'Let thy adventure be hereafter told.
Look yonder. Fresh battalions from the camp
File through the Phocian barrier, to construct
Another phalanx, moving tower of war,
Which scorns the strength of Asia. Let us arm;
That, ready station'd in the glorious van,
We may secure permission from the king
There to continue, and renew the fight.'
That instant brings Megistias near the grot.
To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand
Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard
By Dithyrambus in their slow approach,
The father warns a young and liberal mind—
'Sprung from a distant boundary of Greece,
A foreigner in Sparta, cherish'd there,
Instructed, honour'd, nor unworthy held
To fight for Lacedæmon in her line
Of discipline and valour, lo! my son,
The hour is come to prove thy generous heart;
That in thy hand, not ill-intrusted, shine
The spear and buckler, to maintain the cause
Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recall
Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,
He overlooks the battle; he discerns
The bold and fearful. May the gods I serve

Grant me to hear Leonidas approve
My son! No other boon my age implores.'
The augur paus'd. The animated cheek
Of Menalippus glows. His eager look
Demands the fight. This struck the tender sire,
Who then with moisten'd eyes—'Remember too
A father sees thy danger. Oh! my child,
To me thy honour, as to thee, is dear;
Yet court not death. By every filial tie,
By all my fondness, all my cares, I sue!
Amid the conflict, or the warm pursuit,
Still by the wise Dieneces abide.
His prudent valour knows the' unerring paths
Of glory. He admits thee to his side.
He will direct thy ardour. Go.' They part.
Megistias, turning, is accosted thus
By Dithyrambus—'Venerable seer,
So may that son, whose merit I esteem,
Whose precious head in peril I would die
To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,
As thou deliver'st to Laconia's king
A high and solemn message. While anew
The line is forming, from the' embattled field
I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge
Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.'
The Acarnanian in suspense remains
And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates
Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,
Then quits the' instructed augur, and attends
Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief
Was reassuming his distinguish'd arms,
Which, as a splendid recompense, he bore
From grateful Athens, for atchievements bold,
When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd

Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm
Enclos'd his manly temples. From on high
A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath
A goldon dragon, with effulgent scales,
Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm
He brac'd his buckler. Bordering on the rim,
Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form
Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.
Low as her feet the graceful tunic flow'd.
Betwixt two griffins, on her helmet, sat
A sphynx, with wings expanded; while the face
Of dire Medusa on her breastplate frown'd.
One hand supports a javelin, which confounds
The pride of kings. The other leads along
A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow
A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents;
But from her shoulders all her plumes were shorn,
In favour'd Athens ever now to rest.
This dread of Asia on his mighty arm
Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,
Then spake to Dithyrambus—'See, my friend,
Alone, of all the Grecians who sustain'd
The former onset, inexhausted stand
Platæa's sons. They well may keep the field,
Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day
Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n
Back to their ships, and Athens left secure.
Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank
Thy valour shall be plac'd, to share command,
And every honour with Platæa's chief.'

He said no more, but tow'rds the Grecian van,
Impetuous, ardent, strode. Nor slow behind,
The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd,
Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms;

When lightly, graceful, with his feather'd feet,
Along Scamander's flowery verge he pass'd
To aid the' incens'd divinities of Greece
Against the Phrygian towers. Their eager haste
Soon brings the heroes to the' embattling ranks,
Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts—
'Not to contend, but vanquish, are ye come.
Here in the blood of fugitives, your spears
Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,
But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,
Where from the Malian gulf more distant rise
The' Œtæan rocks, and less confine the straits.
There if we range, extending wide our front,
An ampler scope to havoc will be given.'
To him Dieneces: 'Platæan friend,
Well dost thou counsel. On that widening ground,
Close to the mountain, place thy veteran files.
Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch
Quite to the shore, in phalanx deep, like thine.
The Spartans, wedg'd in this contracted part,
Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits
With lighter bodies. Further back, the line
Of Locris forms a strong reserve.' He said.
The different bands, confiding in his skill,
Move on successive. The Platæans first
Against the hill are station'd, In their van
Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy
Distends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes.
'Bless'd be the great Diomedon, (they shout)
Who brings another hero to our line.
Hail, Dithyrambus! Hail, illustrious youth!
Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd
An early palm at Marathon.' His post
He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek

Amid the foremost rank. Around him crowd
The long-tried warriors. Their unnumber'd scars
Discovering, they in ample phrase recount
Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys
In veneration, nor disdains to hear
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd—
'Leonidas salutes Platæa's chief,
And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants
A further effort with Platæa's band
If yet by toil unconquer'd. But I see
That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.
Hail, glorious veterans! This signal day
May your victorious arms augment the wreaths
Around your venerable heads, and grace
Thermopylæ with Marathonian fame.'
This said, he hastens back. Meantime, advance
The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,
Then Hegesander, Tegeas dauntless chief,
Who near Diomedon, in equal range,
Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.
Alcmæon, bold Eupalamus, succeed,
With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.
Last, on the Malian shore, Mycenæ's youth
Aristobulus draws. From Œta's side
Down to the bay, in well-connected length,
Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,
While twenty bucklers every file condense.
A sure support, Dieneces behind
Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,
There Menalippus, by their leader stand,
Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,
The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame
Of expectation through his light-arm'd force;

While Polydorus, present in his thoughts,
To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.
No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.
This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.
The solemn scene on Œta to his friend
He open'd large; portray'd Melissa's form,
Reveal'd her mandate; when Platæa's chief—
'Such elevation of a female mind
Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain
The conference she asks. This wondrous dame,
Amid her hymns, conceives some lofty thought
To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,
Dread ev'n our women. But, my gentle friend,
Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell
Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods,
Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r?
Or should I thank them, that the softening charm
Of sound or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul?
Yet I confess thy valour breaks that charm,
Which may enrapture, not unman, thy breast.'
To whom his friend—'Doth he, whose lays record
The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,
Doth he dissolve thy spirit? Yet he flows
In all the sweetness harmony can breathe.'
'No, by the gods! (Diomedon rejoins)
I feel that mighty muse. I see the car
Of fierce Achilles, see the' encumber'd wheels
O'er heroes driven, and clotted with their gore.
Another too demands my soul's esteem,
Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen
His muse begirt by furies, while she swell'd
Her tragic numbers. Him, in equal rage
His country's foes o'erwhelming, I beheld
At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuse

Such fire through every bard, the tuneful band
Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.
But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye
To yonder point, remotest in the bay.
Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet
Successive round the jutting land, are sails.
The' Athenian pendant hastens to salute
Leonidas. O Æschylus! my friend,
First in the train of Phœbus and of Mars,
Be thou on board. Swift bounding o'er the waves,
Come, and be witness to heroic deeds!
Brace thy strong harp with loftier-sounding chords,
To celebrate this battle! Fall who may:
But, if they fall with honour, let their names
Round festive goblets in thy numbers ring,
And joy, not grief, accompany the song.'
Conversing thus, their courage they beguil'd,
Which else, impatient of inactive hours,
At long-suspended glory had repin'd.

END OF VOL. I.

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GLOVER,

On the gory breach,
Mute for a space, and motionless she gaz'd;

Vet. H. Leonidas Book 9.

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LEONIDAS.

BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Megistias delivers Melissa's message to Leonidas. Medon, her brother, conducts him to the Temple. She furnishes Leonidas with the means of executing a design he had premeditated to annoy the enemy. They are joined by a body of mariners under the command of Æschylus, a celebrated poet and warrior among the Athenians. Leonidas takes the necessary measures; and, observing, from a summit of Œta, the motions of the Persian army, expects another attack: this is renewed with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocomes, and the principal Persian leaders, at the head of some chosen troops.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VII.

Megistias, urging to unwonted speed
His aged steps, by Dithyrambus charg'd
With sage Melissa's words, had now rejoin'd
The king of Lacedæmon. At his side
Was Maron posted, watchful to receive
His high injunctions. In the rear they stood
Behind two thousand Locrians, deep array'd
By warlike Medon, from Oïleus sprung.
Leonidas to them his anxious mind
Was thus disclosing—'Medon, Maron, hear.
From this low rampart my exploring eye
But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd
Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,
Immense, exhaustless, deluging the ground
With myriads still o'erflowing, may consume,
By endless numbers and unceasing toil,
The Grecian strength. Not marble is our flesh,
Nor adamant our sinews. Silvan powers!
Who dwell on Œta, your superior aid
We must solicit. Your stupendous cliffs,
In those loose rocks and branchless trunks, contain
More fell annoyance than the arm of man.'
He ended; when Megistias—'Virtuous king,
Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,

By their behests, invites thy honour'd feet
To her chaste dwelling, seated on that hill.
To conference of high import she calls
Thee, first of Grecians.' Medon interpos'd—
'She is my sister. Justice rules her ways
With piety and wisdom. To her voice
The nations round give ear. The Muses breathe
Their inspiration through her spotless soul,
Which borders on divinity. She calls
On thee. O, truly styl'd the first of Greeks,
Regard her call! Yon cliff's projecting head
To thy discernment will afford a scope
More full, more certain; thence thy skilful eye
Will best direct the fight.' Melissa's sire
Was ever present to the king in thought,
Who thus to Medon—'Lead, Oïleus' son:
Before the daughter of Oïleus place
My willing feet.' They hasten to the cave.
Megistias, Maron, follow. Through the rock
Leonidas, ascending to the fane,
Rose, like the god of morning from the cell
Of night, when, shedding cheerfulness and day
On hill and vale, emblaz'd with dewy gems,
He gladdens nature. Lacedæmon's king,
Majestically graceful and serene,
Dispels the rigour in that solemn seat
Of holy sequestration. On the face
Of pensive-ey'd religion rapture glows,
In admiration of the godlike man.
Advanc'd Melissa. He her proffer'd hand,
In hue, in purity, like snow, receiv'd.
A heaven-illumin'd dignity of look
On him she fix'd. Rever'd by all, she spake—
'Hail, chief of men! selected by the gods

For purer fame than Hercules acquir'd!
This hour allows no pause.' She leads the king,
With Medon, Maron, and Megistias, down
A slope, declining to the mossy verge
Which terminates the mountain. While they pass
She thus proceeds—'These marble masses view,
Which lie dispers'd around you. They were hewn
From yonder quarry. Note those ponderous beams,
The silvan offspring of that hill. With these,
At my request, the' Amphictyons, from their seat
Of general council, piously decreed
To raise a dome, the ornament of Greece.
Observe those wither'd firs, those mouldering oaks,
Down that declivity, half-rooted, bent,
Inviting human force. Then look below.
There lies Thermopylæ.'—'I see, (exclaims
The high-conceiving hero:) I recal
Thy father's words and forecast. He presag'd
I should not find his daughter's counsel vain.
He, to accomplish what thy wisdom plans,
Hath amplest means supplied. Go, Medon, bring
The thousand peasants, from the' Oïlean vale
Detach'd. Their leader, Melibœus, bring.
Fly, Maron. Every instrument provide
To fell the trees, to drag the massy beams,
To lift the broad-hewn fragments.'—'Are not these
For sacred use reserv'd? (Megistias said:)
Can these be wielded by the hand of Mars
Without pollution?' In a solemn tone
The priestess answer'd—'Reverend man, who bear'st
Pontific wreaths, and thou, great captain, hear!
Forbear to think that my unprompted mind,
Calm and sequester'd in religion's peace,

Could have devis'd a stratagem of war;
Or, unpermitted, could resign to Mars
These rich materials, gather'd to restore,
In strength and splendour, you decrepit walls,
And that time-shaken roof. Rejecting sleep,
Last night I lay, contriving swift revenge
On these Barbarians, whose career profane
O'erturns the Grecian temples, and devotes
Their holy bowers to flames. I left my couch
Long ere the sun his orient gates unbarr'd.
Beneath yon beach my pensive head reclin'd.
The rivulets, the fountains, warbling round,
Attracted slumber. In a dream I saw
Calliopé. Her sisters, all with harps,
Were rang'd around her; as their Parian forms
Show in the temple. "Dost thou sleep? (she said;)
Melissa, dost thou sleep? The barbarous host
Approaches Greece. The first of Grecians comes,
By death to vanquish. Priestess, let him hurl
These marble heaps, these consecrated beams,
Our fane itself, to crush the impious ranks.
The hero summon to our sacred hill.
Reveal the promis'd succour. All is due
To liberty against a tyrant's pride."
She struck her shell. In concert full replied
The sister lyres. Leonidas they sung,
In every note and dialect yet known,
In measures new, in language yet to come.'

She finish'd. Then Megistias—'Dear to Heav'n,
By nations honour'd, and, in towering thought,
O'er either sex pre-eminent, thy words
To me, a soldier and a priest, suffice.
I hesitate no longer.' But the king,
Wrapt in ecstatic contemplation, stood,

Revolving deep an answer, which might suit
His dignity and her's. At lengh he spake—
'Not Lacedæmon's whole collected state
Of senate, people, ephori, and kings;
Not the Amphictyons, whose convention holds
The universal majesty of Greece,
E'er drew such reverence as thy single form,
O all-surpassing woman! worthy child
Of time-renown'd Oïleus! In thy voice
I hear the goddess Liberty. I see,
In thy sublimity of look and port,
That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.
Me thou hast prais'd. My conscious spirit feels
That not to triumph in thy virtuous praise
Were want of virtue. Yet, illustrious dame,
Were I assur'd that oracles delude;
That, unavailing, I should spill my blood;
That all the Muses of subjected Greece
Hereafter would be silent, and my name
Be ne'er transmitted to recording time;
There is in virtue, for her sake alone,
What should uphold my resolution firm.
My country's laws I never would survive.'
Mov'd at his words, reflecting on his fate,
She had relax'd her dignity of mind,
Had sunk in sadness; but her brother's helm
Before her beams. Relumining her night,
He through the cave, like Hesperus, ascends,
The' Oïlean hinds conducting, to atchieve
The enterprise she counsels. Now her ear
Is pierc'd by notes, shrill sounding from the vault.
Upstarts a different band, alert and light,
Athenian sailors. Long and separate files
Of lusty shoulders, eas'd by union, bear

Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave
The restiff anchor. To a naval pipe,
As if one soul invigorated all,
And all compos'd one body, they had trod
In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke,
Throughout their passage. So the spinal strength
Of some portentous serpent, whom the heats
Of Libya breed, indissolubly knit,
But flexible, across the sandy plain,
Or up the mountain, draws his spotted length,
Or where a winding excavation leads
Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of stature large,
In arms, which show'd simplicity of strength,
No decoration of redundant art,
With sable horse-hair floating down his back,
A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait,
Austerely grave and thoughtful, on his shield
The democratic majesty he bore
Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic brass,
Her image stood, with Pallas by her side,
And trampled under each victorious foot
A regal crown; one Persian, one usurp'd
By her own tyrants, on the well-fought plain
Of Marathon confounded. He commands
These future guardians of their country's weal,
Of general Greece the bulwarks. Their high deeds
From Artemisium, from the' empurpled shores
Of Salamis, Renown shall echo wide;
Shall tell posterity, in latest times,
That naval fortitude controuls the world!
Swift Maron, following, brings a vigorous band
Of Helots. Every instrument they wield
To delve, to hew, to heave; and, active, last
Bounds Melibœus, vigilant to urge

The tardy forward. To Laconia's king
Advanc'd the' Athenian leader, and began—
'Thou godlike ruler of Eurotas, hail!
Thee by my voice Themistocles salutes,
The admiral of Athens. I conduct,
By public choice, the squadron of my tribe,
And Æschylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n
Three days to glory on Eubœa's coast,
Whose promontories almost rise to meet
Thy ken from Œta's cliffs. This morning saw
The worsted foe, from Artemisium driv'n,
Leave their disabled ships, and floating wrecks,
For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd
I was detach'd to bring the' auspicious news,
To bid thee welcome. Fortunate, my keel
Hath swiftly borne me. Joyful I concur
In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs,
Who met me landing, instant from the ships
A thousand gallant mariners I drew,
Who till the setting sun shall lend their toil.'
'Themistocles and thou accept my heart;
(Leonidas replied; and closely strain'd
The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breast:)
To envy is ignoble; to admire
The' activity of Athens will become
A king of Sparta, who, like thee, condemn'd
His country's sloth. But Sparta now is arm'd.
Thou shalt commend. Behold me, station'd here
To watch the wild vicissitudes of war,
Direct the course of slaughter. To this post
By that superior woman I was call'd.
By long protracted fight lest fainting Greece
Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd soul
Through her, whom heaven enlightens, hath devis'd

To whelm the numerous, persevering foe
In hideous death, and signalize the day
With horrors new to war. The Muses prompt
The bright atchievement. Lo! from Athens smiles
Minerva too. Her swift, auspicious aid
In thee we find, and these, an ancient race,
By her and Neptune cherish'd.' Straight he meets
The gallant train; majestic, with his arms
Outstretch'd, in this applauding strain he spake—
'O liberal people, earliest arm'd, to shield
Not your own Athens more than general Greece,
You best deserve her gratitude. Her praise
Will rank you foremost on the rolls of fame.'
They hear, they gaze, revering and reverd.
Fresh numbers muster, rushing from the hills,
The thickets round. Melissa, pointing, spake—
'I am their leader. Natives of the hills
Are these, the rural worshippers of Pan,
Who breathes an ardour through their humble minds
To join you warriors. Vassals these, not mine,
But of the Muses, and their hallow'd laws,
Administer'd by me. Their patient hands
Make culture smile, where Nature seems to chide;
Nor wanting my instructions, or my pray'rs,
Fertility they scatter, by their toil,
Around this aged temple's wild domain.
Is Melibœus here? Thou fence secure
To old Oïleus from the cares of time,
Thrice art thou welcome! Useful, wise, belov'd,
Where'er thou sojournest, on Œta known,
As oft the bounty of a father's love
Thou on Melissa's solitude dost pour,
Be thou director of these mountain-hinds!'
The' important labour, to inspiring airs,

From flutes and harps, in symphony, with hymns
Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,
In bands divided under different chiefs.
Huge timbers, blocks of marble, to remove
They first attempted; then assembled stones,
Loose in their beds, and wither'd trunks, uptorn
By tempests; next, dismember'd from the rock,
Broad, rugged fragments; from the mountains hew'd
Their venerable firs and aged oaks,
Which, of their branches by the lightning bar'd,
Presented still against the blasting flame
Their hoary pride, unshaken. These the Greeks,
But chief the' Athenian mariners, to force
Uniting skill with massy levers heave,
With strong knit cables drag; till, now dispos'd
Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles
Nod o'er the Straits. This new and sudden scene
Might lift imagination to belief
That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds
Of ever-blooming asphodel had heard
The Muses call; had brought their fabled harps,
At whose mellifluent charm once more the trees
Had burst their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd
In rapid motion from the quarry's womb,
That day to follow harmony, in aid
Of generous valour. Fancy might discern
Cerulean Thetis, from her coral-grot
Emerging, seated on her pearly car,
With Nereids, floating on the surge below,
To view, in wonder, from the Malian bay
The attic sons of Neptune, who forsook
Their wooden walls to range the' Œtæan crags,
To rend the forest, and disjoin the rocks.

Meantime, a hundred sheep are slain. Their limbs
From burning piles fume grateful. Bounty spreads
A decent board. Simplicity attends.
Then spake the priestess—'Long-enduring Chiefs!
Your efforts, now accomplish'd, may admit
Refection, due to this hard-labour'd train,
Due to yourselves.' Her hospitable smile
Wins her well-chosen guests, Laconia's king,
Her brother, Marou, Æschylus divine,
With Acarnania's priest. Her first commands
To Melibœus, sedulous and blithe,
Distribute plenty through the toiling crowd.
Then, screen'd beneath close umbrage of an oak,
Each care-divested chief the banquet shares.
Cool breezes, whispering, flutter in the leaves,
Whose verdure, pendant in an arch, repel
The westering sun's hot glare. Favonius bland,
His breath impregnates with exhaling sweets
From flowery beds, whose scented clusters deck
The gleaming pool in view. Fast by a brook,
In limpid lapses, over native steps
Attunes his cadence to sonorous strings,
And liquid accents of Melissa's maids.
The floating air in melody respires.
A rapture mingles in the calm repast.
Uprises Æschylus. A goblet full
He grasps—'To those divinities who dwell
In yonder temple, this libation first;
To thee, benignant hostess, next I pour;
Then to thy fame, Leonidas!' he said.
His breast, with growing heat distended, prompts
His eager hand, to whose expressive sign
One of the virgins cedes her sacred lyre.

Their choral song complacency restrains.
The soul of music, bursting from his touch,
At once gives birth to sentiment sublime.
'O Hercules and Perseus! (he began)
Star-spangled twins of Leda, and the rest
Of Jove's immediate seed, your splendid acts
Mankind protected while the race was rude;
While o'er the earth's unciviliz'd extent
The savage monster and the ruffian sway'd,
More savage still. No policy, nor laws,
Had fram'd societies. By single strength
A single ruffian or a monster fell.
The legislator rose. There lights in Greece,
Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus, blaz'd.
Then, substituting wisdom, Jove, profuse
Of his own blood no longer, gave us more
In discipline and manners, which can form
A hero like Leonidas, than all
The god-begotten progeny before.
The pupils next of Solon claim the muse.
Sound your hoarse conchs, ye Tritons! You beheld
The Atlantean shape of slaughter wade
Through your astonish'd deeps, his purple arm
Uplifting high before the' Athenian line.
You saw bright Conquest, riding on the gale
Which swell'd their sails; saw Terror at their helms,
To guide their brazen beaks on Asia's pride:
Her adamantine grapple from their decks
Fate threw, and ruin on the hostile fleet
Inextricably fasten'd. Sound, ye nymphs
Of Œta's mountains, of her woods and streams,
Who hourly witness to Melissa's worth,
Ye Oreäds, Dryads, Naiads, sound her praise!

Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac'd,
Like Solon and Licurgus by their sons.'
Laconia's hero, and the priestess, bow'd
Their foreheads grateful to the bard sublime.
She, rising, takes the word—'More sweet thy lyre
To friendship's ear than terrible to foes
Thy spear in battle, though the keenest point
Which ever pierc'd Barbarians. Close we here
The song and banquet. Hark! a distant din
From Asia's camp requires immediate care.'
She leads. Along the rocky verge they pass.
In calm delight, Leonidas surveys
All in the order which he last assign'd,
As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he cast
A wary look. The mountain's furthest crag
Now reach'd, Melissa to the king began—
'Observe that space below, dispers'd in dales,
In hollows, winding through dissever'd rocks.
The slender outlet, screen'd by yonder shrubs,
Leads to the pass. There stately, to my view
The martial queen of Caria, yester sun
Descending show'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.
But she, devoted to the Persian king,
In ambush there preserv'd his flying host.
She last retreated; but, retreating, prov'd
Her valour equal to a better cause.
Again I see the heroine approach.'
Megistias then—'I see a powerful arm,
Sustaining firm the large, emblazon'd shield,
Which, fashion'd first in Caria, we have learn'd
To imitate in Greece. Sublime, her port
Bespeaks a mighty spirit. Priestess, look.
An act of piety she now performs,

Directing those, perhaps her Carian band,
To bear dead brethren from the bloody field.
Among the horsemen an exalted form,
Like Demaratus, strikes my searching eye.
To me, recalling his transcendent rank
In Sparta once, he seems a languid sun,
Which dimly sinks in exhalations dark,
Enveloping his radiance.' While he spake,
Intent on martial duty, Medon views
The dangerous thicket; Lacedæmon's chief,
Around the region his considerate eye
Extending, marks each movement of the foe.
The' imperial Persian, from his lofty car,
Had, in the morning's early conflict, seen
His vanquish'd army pouring from the straits
Back to their tents, and o'er his camp dispers'd
In consternation; as a river bursts
Impetuous from his fountain, then enlarg'd,
Spreads a dead surface o'er some level marsh.
The' astonish'd king thrice started from his seat;
Shame, fear, and indignation rent his breast;
As ruin irresistible were near
To overwhelm his millions. 'Haste! (he call'd
To Hyperanthes) haste and meet the Greeks.
Their daring rage, their insolence, repel.
From such dishonour vindicate our name.'
His royal brother through the' extensive camp
Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,
Each active prince, from every tent remote,
The hardiest troops, he summon'd. Caria's queen,
To Hyperanthes bound by firm esteem
Of worth, unrivall'd in the Persian court,
In solemn pace was now returning slow

Before a band, transporting from the field
Their slain companions to the sandy beach.
She stopt, and thus address'd him :—' Learn, O prince,
From one whose wishes on thy merit wait,
The only means to bind thy gallant brow
In fairest wreaths. To break the Grecian line
In vain ye struggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band
In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe.
Nor to secure a thicket next the pass
Forget. Selected numbers station there.
Farewell, young hero! May thy fortune prove
Unlike to mine. Had Asia's millions spar'd
One myriad to sustain me, none had seen
Me quit the dangerous contest. But the head
Of base Argestes on some future day
Shall feel my treasur'd vengeance. From the fleet
I only stay till burial-rites are paid
To these dead Carians. On this fatal strand
May Artemisia's grief appease your ghosts,
My faithful subjects, sacrific'd in vain.'
The hero grateful and respectful heard
What soon his warmth neglected, at the sight
Of spears which flam'd innumerable round.
Beyond the rest in lustre was a band,
The satellites of Xerxes. They forsook
Their constant orbit round the' imperial throne
At this dread crisis. To a myriad fix'd,
From their unchanging number they deriv'd
The title of immortals. Light their spears;
Set in pomegranates of refulgent gold,
Or burnish'd silver, were the slender blades.

Magnificent and stately were the ranks.
The prince, commanding mute attention, spake—
'In two divisions part your number, Chiefs.
One will I lead to onset. In my ranks
Abrocomes, Hydarnes, shall advance,
Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave,
To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece.
Thou, Abradates, by Sosarmes join'd,
Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest
From action. Future succour they must lend,
Should envious fate exhaust our numerous files;
For, O pure Mithra! may thy radiant eye
Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
The Persian name dishonour. May the acts
Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,
In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords!
What endless infamy will blast your names,
Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,
Your power defy; when Babylon hath lower'd
Her towering crest; when Lydia's pride is quell'd
In Crœsus vanquish'd; when her empire lost
Ecbatana deplores. Ye chosen guard,
Your king's immortal bulwark, O reflect
What deeds from your superior swords he claims!
You share his largest bounty. To your faith,
Your constancy and prowess, he commits
His throne, his person, and this day his fame!'
They wave their banners, blazing in the sun,
Who then three hours tow'rd Hesperus had driv'n
From his meridian height. Amid their shouts
The hoarse-resounding billows are not heard,
Of different nations, and in different garb,
Innumerous and varid, like the shells

By restless Thetis scatter'd on the beach
O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,
Straight by Leonidas descried. The van
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,
Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march
Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-sounding pass.
So, where the' unequal globe in mountains swells,
A torrent rolls his thundering surge between
The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous dash
The waters, bursting on the pointed crags;
The valley roars; the marble channel foams.
The' undaunted Greeks immoveable withstand
The dire encounter. Soon the' impetuous shock
Of thousands and of myriads shakes the gound.
Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,
Whose sides half-arching o'er the hosts project,
The unabating fortitude of Greece
Maintains her line; the' untrain'd Barbarians charge
In savage fury. With inverted trunks,
Or bent obliquely from the shagged ridge,
The silvan horrors overshade the fight.
The clanging trump, the crash of mingled spears,
The groan of death, and war's discordant shouts,
Alarm the echoes in their neighbouring caves;
Woods, cliffs, and shores, return the dreadful sound.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Hyperanthes discontinuing the fight while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus (a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Darius) advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophantus, the Mantinean, whom he overcomes; then, engaging with Dithyrambus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues, where Diomedon distinguishes his valour. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own efforts, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedæmonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and, making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army. Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are entirely destroyed.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VIII.

Amid the van of Persia was a youth,
Nam'd Teribazus: not for golden stores,
Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,
By fleece-abounding sheep, or generous steeds,
Nor yet for power, nor splendid honours, fam'd.
Rich was his mind in every art divine;
Through every path of science had he walk'd,
The votary of wisdom. In the years
When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,
He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page
Of Zoroastres. Then his towering thoughts
High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd.
He, from the lofty Babylonian fane,
With learn'd Chaldæans trac'd the heavenly sphere;
There number'd o'er the vivid fires which gleam
On night's bespangled bosom. Nor unheard
Were Indian sages from sequester'd bowers,
While on the banks of Ganges they disclos'd
The powers of nature, whether in the woods,
The fruitful glebe or flower, the healing plant,
The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
Or in the purer element of fire.
The realm of old Sesostris next he view'd,
Mysterious Egypt, with her hidden rites

Of Isis and Osiris. Last he sought
The' Ionian Greeks, from Athens sprung; nor pass'd
Miletus by, which once in rapture heard
The tongue of Thales; nor Priene's walls,
Where wisdom dwelt with Bias; nor the seat
Of Pittacus, rever'd on Lesbian shores.
The' enlighten'd youth to Susa now return'd,
Place of his birth. His merit soon was dear
To Hyperanthes. It was now the time
That discontent and murmur on the banks
Of Nile were loud and threatening. Chembes there
The only faithful stood, a potent lord,
Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties
With his own blood. To this Egyptian prince
Bright Ariana was the destin'd spouse,
From the same bed with Hyperanthes born.
Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd
By that fond brother, tender of her weal.
The' Egyptian boundaries they gain. They hear
Of insurrection, of the Pharian tribes
In arms, and Chembes in the tumult slain.
They pitch their tents, at midnight are assail'd,
Surpris'd, their leaders massacred, the slaves
Of Ariana captives borne away,
Her own pavilion forc'd, her person seiz'd
By ruffian hands; when timely, to redeem
Her and the' invaded camp from further spoil,
Flies Teribazus with a rallied band,
Swift on her chariot seats the royal fair,
Nor waits the dawn. Of all her menial train
None but three female slaves are left. Her guide,
Her comforter and guardian, fate provides
In him, distinguish'd by his worth alone,
No prince nor satrap, now the single chief

Of her surviving guard. Of regal birth,
But with excelling graces in her soul,
Unlike an eastern princess, she inclines
To his consoling, his instructive tongue
An humbled ear. Amid the converse sweet,
Her charms, her mind, her virtues, he explores,
Admiring. Soon is admiration chang'd
To love; nor loves he sooner than despairs.
From morn till even her passing wheels he guards
Back to Euphrates. Often, as she mounts
Or quits the car, his arm her weight sustains
With trembling pleasure. His assiduous hand
From purest fountains wafts the living flood.
Nor seldom, by the fair-one's soft command
Would he repose him, at her feet reclin'd;
While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
Won by his grateful eloquence, which sooth'd
With sweet variety the tedious march,
Beguiling time. He too would then forget
His pains awhile, in raptures vain entranc'd;
Delusion all, and fleeting rays of joy,
Soon overcast by more intense despair.
Like wintry clouds, which, opening for a time,
Tinge their black folds with gleams of scatter'd light,
Then, swiftly closing, on the brow of morn
Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom
The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach
The tower of Belus. Hyperanthes leads
Through Babylon an army to chastise
The crime of Egypt. Teribazus here
Parts from his princess, marches bright in steel
Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms
On conquer'd Nile. To Susa he returns,
To Ariana's residence, and bears

Deep in his heart the' immedicable wound.
But unreveal'd and silent was his pain;
Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd,
Nor shun'd resort: but o'er his sorrows cast
A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
Conceal'd his anguish; while the secret flame
Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd,
His soul still brooding o'er these mournful thoughts—
'Can I, O Wisdom! find relief in thee,
Who dost approve my passion? From the snares
Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart,
But here thyself art charm'd; where softness, grace,
And every virtue, dignify desire.
Yet thus to love, despairing to possess,
Of all the torments, by relentless fate
On life inflicted, is the most severe.
Do I not feel thy warnings in my breast,
That flight alone can save me? I will go
Back to the learn'd Chaldæans, on the banks
Of Ganges seek the sages; where to Heav'n
With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r.
O wretched Teribazus! all conspires
Against thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares
To overwhelm the Grecians. Every youth
Is call'd to war; and I, who lately pois'd
With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,
Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,
Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly
From Ariana, who with Asia's queens
The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn?
Then be it so. Again I will adore
Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
Her gracious sweetness, shall again diffuse
Resistless magic through my ravish'd heart;

Till passion, thus with double rage inflam'd,
Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast;
Then—but in vain through darkness do I search
My fate—Despair and Fortune be my guides!'
The day arriv'd when Xerxes first advanc'd
His arms from Susa's gates. The Persian dames,
(So were accustom'd all the eastern fair)
In sumptuous cars accompanied his march;
A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd.
Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels
Attends and pines. Such woes oppress the youth;
Oppress, but not enervate. From the van
He in this second conflict had withstood
The threatening frown of adamantine Mars;
He singly, while his bravest friends recoil'd.
His manly temples no tiara bound.
The slender lance of Asia he disdain'd,
And her light target. Eminent he tower'd
In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes;
Among the' Ionians were his strenuous limbs
Train'd in the gymnic school. A fulgent casque
Enclos'd his head. Before his face and chest,
Down to the knees, an ample shield was spread.
A ponderous spear he shook. The well-aim'd point
Sent two Phliasians to the realms of death,
With four Tegæans; whose indignant chief,
Brave Hegesander, vengeance breathed in vain,
With streaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far, unmatch'd,
His arm prevail'd; when Hyperanthes call'd
From fight his fainting legions. Now each band
Their languid courage reinforc'd by rest.
Meantime, with Teribazus thus conferr'd

The' applauding prince—'Thou much deserving
youth!
Had twenty warriors in the dangerous van
Like thee maintain'd the onset, Greece had wept
Her prostrate ranks. The wearied fight awhile
I now relax, till Abradates strong,
Orontes and Mazæus, are advanc'd.
Then to the conflict will I give no pause.
If not by prowess, yet by endless toil
Successive numbers shall exhaust the foe.'
He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce replied,
But to himself complain'd, the amorous youth.
'Still do I languish, mourning o'er the fame
My arm acquires. Tormented heart! thou seat
Of constant sorrow, what deceitful smiles
Yet canst thou borrow from unreal hope
To flatter life? At Ariana's feet
What if with supplicating knees I bow,
Implore her pity, and reveal my love?
Wretch! canst thou climb to yon effulgent orb,
And share the splendours which irradiate Heav'n?
Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,
Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the claim
Of Asia's proudest potentates and kings?
Unless within her bosom I inspir'd
A passion fervent as my own, nay more,
Such as, dispelling every virgin fear,
Might, unrestrain'd, disclose its fond desire,
My love is hopeless; and her willing hand,
Should she bestow it, draws from Asia's lord
On both perdition.' By despair benumb'd,
His limbs their action lose. A wish for death
O'ercasts and chills his soul. When sudden cries

From Ariamnes rouse his drooping powers.
Alike in manners, they, of equal age,
Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil
Of war. Together they victorious chas'd
The bleeding sons of Nile, when Egypt's pride
Before the sword of Hyperanthes fell.
That lov'd companion Teribazus views
By all abandon'd, in his gore outstretch'd,
The victor's spoil. His languid spirit starts;
He rushes ardent from the Persian line;
The wounded warrior in his strong embrace
He bears away. By indignation stung,
Fierce from the Grecians, Diophantus sends
A loud defiance. Teribazus leaves
His rescued friend. His massy shield he rears;
High brandishing his formidable spear,
He turns intrepid on the' approaching foe.
Amazement follows. On he strides, and shakes
The plumed honours of his shining crest.
The' ill-fated Greek awaits the' unequal fight;
Pierc'd in the throat, with sounding arms he falls.
Through every file the Mantineans mourn.
Long on the slain the victor fix'd his sight
With these reflections—'By thy splendid arms
Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank.
From thy ill fortune I perhaps derive
A more conspicuous lustre. What if Heav'n
Should add new victims, such as thou, to grace
My undeserving hand? Who knows but she
Might smile upon my trophies? Oh! vain thought!
I see the pride of Asia's monarch swell
With vengeance, fatal to her beauteous head.
Disperse, ye phantom hopes! too long, torn heart,
Hast thou with grief contended. Lo! I plant

My foot this moment on the verge of death,
By fame invited, by despair impell'd,
To pass the' irremeable bound. No more
Shall Teribazus backward turn his step,
But here conclude his doom. Then cease to heave,
Thou troubled bosom! every thought be calm
Now at the' approach of everlasting peace.'
He ended; when a mighty foe drew nigh,
Not less than Dithyrambus. Ere they join'd,
The Persian-warrior to the Greek began—
'Art thou the' unconquerable chief, who mow'd
Our battle down? That eagle on thy shield
Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force
I rashly purpos'd. That my single arm
Thou deign'st to meet, accept my thanks; and know
The thought of conquest less employs my soul
Than admiration of thy glorious deeds,
And that by thee I cannot fall disgrac'd.'
He ceas'd. These words the Thespian youth return'd—
'Of all the praises from thy generous mouth,
The only portion my desert may claim
Is this my bold adventure, to confront
Thee, yet unmatch'd. What Grecian hath not mark'd
Thy flaming steel? From Asia's boundless camp
Not one hath equall'd thy victorious might.
But whence thy armour of the Grecian form?
Whence thy tall spear, thy helmet? Whence the weight
Of that strong shield? Unlike thy eastern friends,
O if thou be'st some fugitive, who, lost
To liberty and virtue, art become
A tyrant's vile stipendiary, that arm,
That valour, thus triumphant, I deplore,

Which, after all their efforts and success,
Deserve no honour from the gods or men.'
Here Teribazus in a sigh rejoin'd—
'I am to Greece a stranger, am a wretch
To thee unknown, who courts this hour to die,
Yet not ignobly, but in death to raise
My name from darkness, while I end my woes.'
The Grecian then—'I view thee, and I mourn.
A dignity, which virtue only bears;
Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,
Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye, demand
My veneration: and, whatever be
The malice of thy fortune, what the cares
Infesting thus thy quiet, they create
Within my breast the pity of a friend.
Why then, constraining my reluctant hand
To act against thee, will thy might support
The' unjust ambition of malignant kings,
The foes to virtue, liberty, and peace?
Yet, free from rage or enmity, I lift
My adverse weapon. Victory I ask:
Thy life may fate for happier days reserve.'
This said, their beaming lances they protend,
Of hostile hate or fury both devoid,
As on the Isthmian or Olympic sands
For fame alone contending. Either host,
Pois'd on their arms, in silent wonder gaze.
The fight commences. Soon the Grecian spear,
Which, all the day in constant battle worn,
Unnumber'd shields and corselets had transfix'd,
Against the Persian buckler shivering, breaks,
Its master's hand disarming. Then began
The sense of honour and the dread of shame,
To swell in Dithyrambus. Undismay'd,

He grappled with his foe, and instant seiz'd
His threatening spear, before the' uplifted arm
Could execute the meditated wound.
The weapon burst between their struggling grasp.
Their hold they loosen, bare their shining swords.
With equal swiftness to defend or charge,
Each active youth advances and recedes.
On every side they traverse. Now direct,
Obliquely now, the wheeling blades descend.
Still is the conflict dubious; when the Greek
Dissembling, points his falchion to the ground,
His arm depressing, as o'ercome by toil;
While with his buckler cautious he repels
The blows, repeated by his active foe.
Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades
The ranks of Asia; Hyperanthes strides
Before the line, preparing to receive
His friend triumphant; while the wary Greek
Calm and defensive bears the' assault. At last,
As by the' incautious fury of his strokes,
The Persian swung his covering shield aside;
The fatal moment Dithyrambus seiz'd.
Light darting forward, with his feet outstretch'd,
Between the' unguarded ribs he plung'd his steel.
Affection, grief, and terror, wing the speed
Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe
The Greek retires, not distant, and awaits
The Persian prince. But he, with watery cheeks,
In speechless anguish clasps his dying friend;
From whose cold lip, with interrupted phrase,
These accents break—'O dearest, best of men!
Ten thousand thoughts of gratitude and love
Are struggling in my heart—O'erpowering fate
Denies my voice the utterance—O my friend!

O Hyperanthes! Hear my tongue unfold
What, had I liv'd, thou never shouldst have known.
I lov'd thy sister! With despair I lov'd!
Soliciting this honourable doom,
Without regret, in Persia's sight and thine,
I fall.'—The' inexorable hand of fate
Weighs down his eyelids, and the gloom of death
His fleeting light eternally o'ershades.
Him on Choaspes o'er the blooming verge
A frantic mother shall bewail; shall strew
Her silver tresses in the crystal wave;
While all the shores re-echo to the name
Of Teribazus lost. The' afflicted prince,
Contemplating in tears the pallid corse,
Vents in these words the bitterness of grief.
'Oh Teribazus! Oh my friend! whose loss
I will deplore for ever. Oh what pow'r,
By me, by thee offended, clos'd thy breast
To Hyperanthes, in distrust unkind!
She should, she must have lov'd thee! Now no more
Thy placid virtues, thy instructive tongue,
Shall drop their sweetness on my secret hours.
But in complaints doth friendship waste the time,
Which to immediate vengeance should be giv'n!'
He ended, rushing furious on the Greek;
Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd,
While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd
The last embraces of his gasping friend,
Stood nigh, reclin'd in sadness on his shield,
And in the pride of victory repin'd.
Unmark'd, his foe approach'd. But forward sprung
Diomedon. Before the Thespian youth
Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus—

'Hold thee, Barbarian, from a life more worth
Than thou and Xerxes, with his host of slaves.'
His words he seconds with his rapid lance.
Soon a tremendous conflict had ensued;
But Intaphernes, Mindus, and a crowd
Of Persian lords, advancing, fill the space
Betwixt the'encountering chiefs. In mutual wrath,
With fruitless efforts, they attempt the fight.
So rage two bulls along the' opposing banks
Of some deep flood, which parts the fruitful mead.
Defiance thunders from their angry mouths
In vain; in vain the furrow'd sod they rend;
Wide rolls the stream, and intercepts the war.
As, by malignant fortune, if a drop
Of moisture mingles with a burning mass
Of liquid metal, instant showers of death
On every side the' exploding fluid spreads;
So disappointment irritates the flame
Of fierce Platæa's chief, whose vengeance bursts
In wide destruction. Embas, Daucus, fall;
Arsæus, Ochus, Mendes, Artias, die;
And ten most hardy of the' immortal guard;
To shivers breaking on the Grecian shield
Their gold embellish'd weapons, raise a mound
O'er thy pale body, oh! in prime destroy'd,
Of Asia's garden once the fairest plant,
Fall'n Teribazus! Thy distracted friend
From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd
By forceful zeal of satraps to the shore;
Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd
The succours new, by Abradates brought,
Orontes and Mazæus. Turning swift,
Abrocomes inform'd his brother thus—

'Strong reinforcement from the' immortal guard,
Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
In charge to harass, by perpetual toil,
Those Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite
To me thy valour. Here the hostile ranks
Less stable seem. Our joint impression try:
Let all the weight of battle here impend.
Rouse, Hyperanthes! Give regret to winds.
Who hath not lost a friend this direful day?
Let not our private cares assist the Greeks,
Too strong already, or let sorrow act:
Mourn and revenge.' These animating words
Send Hyperanthes to the foremost line.
His vengeful ardour leads. The battle joins.
Who stemm'd this tide of onset? Who imbrued
His shining spear the first in Persian blood?
Eupalamus. Artembares he slew,
With Derdas fierce, whom Caucasus had rear'd
On his tempestuous brow, the savage sons
Of violence and rapine. But their doom
Fires Hyperanthes, whose vindictive blade
Arrests the victor in his haughty course.
Beneath the strong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,
Melissus swells the number of the dead.
None could Mycenæ boast of prouder birth
Than young Melissus, who in silver mail
The line embellish'd. He, in Cirrha's mead,
Where high Parnassus from his double top
O'ershades the Pythian games, the envied prize
Of fame obtain'd. Low sinks his laurell'd head
In death's cold night, and horrid gore deforms
The graceful hair. Impatient to revenge,
Aristobulus strides before the van.
A storm of fury darkens all his brow.

Around he rolls his gloomy eye. For death
Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
Deriv'd from Crœsus, once imperial lord
Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept,
When, with delusive oracles beguil'd
By Delphi's god, he pass'd their fatal waves
A mighty empire to dissolve: nor knew
The' ill-destin'd prince that envious fortune watch'd
That direful moment, from his hand to wrest
The sceptre of his fathers. In the shade
Of humble life his race on Tmolus' brow
Lay hid; till, rous'd to battle, on this field
Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed
In him extinct for ever. Lycis dies;
For boisterous war ill chosen: he was skill'd
To tune the lulling flute and melt the heart,
Or with his pipe's awakening strain allure
The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance:
They on the verdant level graceful mov'd
In varied measures; while the cooling breeze,
Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er
Their snowy breasts, and smooth Cäyster's stream,
Soft-gliding, murmur'd by. The hostile blade
Draws forth his entrails: prone he falls. Not long
The victor triumphs. From the prostrate corse
Of Lycis, while, insulting, he extracts
The reeking weapon, Hyperanthes' steel
Invades his knee, and cuts the sinewy cords.
The Mycenæans with uplifted shields,
Corinthians and Phliasians, close around
The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage
The contest glows. Abrocomes incites
Each noble Persian. Each his voice obeys.
Here Abradates, there Mazæus, press,

Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire
From toil or peril. Urg'd on every side,
Mycenæ's band to fortune leave their chief.
Despairing, raging, destitute, he stands,
Propt on his spear. His wound forbids retreat.
None, but his brother Eumenes, abides
The dire extremity. His studded orb
Is held defensive. On his arm the sword
Of Hyperanthes rapidly descends.
Down drops the buckler, and the sever'd hand
Resigns its hold. The unprotected pair
By Asia's hero to the ground are swept;
As to a reaper crimson poppies lower
Their heads, luxuriant on the yellow plain.
From both their breasts the vital currents flow,
And mix their streams. Elate, the Persians pour
Their numbers, deepening on the foe, dismay'd.
The Greeks their station painfully maintain.
This Anaxander saw, whose faithless tongue
His colleague Leontiades bespake—
'The hour is come to serve our Persian friends.
Behold, the Greeks are press'd. Let Thebes retire,
A bloodless conquest yielding to the king.'
This said, he drew his Thebans from their post,
Not with unpunish'd treachery. The lance
Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat;
Nor knew the Asian chief that Asia's friend
Before him bled. Meantime, as mighty Jove,
Or he more ancient on the throne of heaven,
When from the womb of Chaos dark the world
Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar
Of atoms yet discordant and unform'd,
Confusion thence with powerful voice dispell'd,
Till light and order universal reign'd;

So from the hill Leonidas survey'd
The various war. He saw the Theban rout;
That Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ, look'd
Affrighted backward. Instantly his charge
Is borne by Maron, whom obedience wings,
Precipitating down the sacred cave,
That Sparta's ranks, advancing, should repair
The disunited phalanx. Ere they move
Dieneces inspires them—'Fame, my friends,
Calls forth your valour in a signal hour.
For you this glorious crisis she reserv'd,
Laconia's splendour to assert. Young man,
Son of Megistias, follow.'—He conducts
The' experienc'd troop. They lock their shields, and, wedg'd
In dense arrangement, repossess the void
Left by the faithless Thebans, and repulse
The' exulting Persians. When, with efforts vain,
These oft renew'd the contest, and recoil'd
As oft, confounded with diminish'd ranks,
Lo! Hyperanthes blush'd, repeating late
The words of Artemisia—'Learn, O Chiefs!
The only means of glory and success.
Unlike the others, whom we newly chas'd,
These are a band selected from the Greeks,
Perhaps the Spartans, whom we often hear
By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line
In vain we struggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Do not we preside
O'er Asia's armies, and our courage boast,
Our martial art above the vulgar herd?
Let us, ye Chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks
To form a troop, and emulate the foe.'
They wait not dubious. On the Malian shore

In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd
Of all the nobles: Abradates strong,
Orontes bold, Mazæus, and the might
Of brave Abrocomes, with each who bore
The highest honours, and excell'd in arms;
Themselves the lords of nations, who before
The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.
To these succeed a chosen number, drawn
From Asia's legions, vaunted most in fight;
Who from their king perpetual stipends share;
Who, station'd round the provinces, by force
His tyranny uphold. In every part
Is Hyperanthes active, ardent, seen
Throughout the huge battalion. He adjusts
Their equal range; then, cautious, lest on march
Their unaccustom'd order should relax,
Full in the centre of the foremost rank
Orontes plants, committing to his hand
The' imperial standard; whose expanded folds
Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun
The richest die of Tyre. The royal bird
Amid the gorgeous tincture shone express'd
In high-embroider'd gold. The wary prince,
On this conspicuous, leading, sign of war,
Commands each satrap, posted in the van,
To fix his eye regardful; to direct
By this alone his even pace and slow,
Retiring, or advancing. So the star,
Chief of the spangles on that fancied bear,
Once an Idæan nymph, and nurse of Jove,
Bright Cynosura, to the boreal pole
Attracts the sailor's eye, when distance hides
The headland signals, and her guiding ray,
New-risen, she throws. The hero next appoints

That every warrior through the lengthening files,
Observing none but those before him plac'd,
Shall watch their motions, and their steps pursue.
Nor is the' important thicket next the pass
Forgot. Two thousand of the' immortal guard
That station seize. His orders all perform'd,
Close by the standard he assumes his post.
Intrepid, thence he animates his friends—
'Heroic Chieftains, whose unconquer'd force
Rebellious Egypt and the Libyan felt,
Think what the splendour of your former deeds
From you exacts. Remember, from the Great
Illustrious actions are a debt to fame.
No middle path remains for them to tread,
Whom she hath once ennobled. Lo! this day
By trophies new will signalize your names,
Or in dishonour will for ever cloud.'
He said, and vigorous all to fight proceed.
As, when tempestuous Eurus stems the weight
Of western Neptune, struggling through the straits
Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm
With rapid wing reverberates the tide;
There the contending surge, with furrow'd tops,
To mountains swells, and, whelming o'er the beach
On either coast, impels the hoary foam
On Mauritanian and Iberian strands:
Such is the dreadful onset. Persia keeps
Her foremost ranks unbroken, which are fill'd
By chosen warriors; while the numerous crowd,
Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,
Give weight and pressure to the' embattled chiefs,
Despising danger. Like the mural strength
Of some proud city, bulwark'd round, and arm'd
With rising towers, to guard her wealthy stores,

Immovable, impenetrable, stood
Laconia's serried phalanx. In their face
Grim Tyranny her threatening fetters shakes,
Red Havoc grinds, insatiable, his jaws.
Greece is behind; intrusting to their swords
Her laws, her freedom, and the sacred urns,
Of their forefathers. Present now to thought
Their altars rise, the mansions of their birth,
Whate'er they honour, venerate, and love.
Bright in the Persian van the' exalted lance
Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him press'd
Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk
Of Abradates, terrible in war.
Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, was seen
Dieneces; while Agis, close in rank
With Menalippus, and the added strength
Of dauntless Maron, their connected shields
Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains
The conflict undecided; nor could Greece
Repel the adverse numbers, nor the weight
Of Asia's band select, remove the Greeks.
Swift from Laconia's king, perceiving soon
The Persian's new arrangement, Medon flew,
Who thus the staid Dieneces address'd—
'Leonidas commands the Spartan ranks
To measure back some paces. Soon, he deems,
The unexperienc'd foes in wild pursuit
Will break their order. Then the charge renew.'
This heard, the signal of retreat is given.
The Spartans seem to yield. The Persians stop.
Astonishment restrains them, and the doubt
Of unexpected victory. Their sloth
Abrocomes awakens—'By the Sun,

They fly before us! My victorious friends,
Do you delay to enter Greece? Away!
Rush on intrepid! I already hear
Our horse, our chariots, thundering on her plains.
I see her temples wrapt in Persian fires.'
He spake. In hurried violence they roll
Tumultuous forward. All in headlong pace
Disjoin their order, and the line dissolve.
This when the sage Dieneces descries,
The Spartans halt, returning to the charge
With sudden vigour. In a moment, pierc'd
By his resistless steel, Orontes falls,
And quits the' imperial banner. This the chief
In triumph waves. The Spartans press the foe.
Close wedg'd and square, in slow, progressive pace,
O'er heaps of mangled carcasses and arms,
Invincible they tread. Composing flutes
Each thought, each motion, harmonize. No rage
Untunes their souls. The phalanx yet more deep
Of Medon follows; while the lighter bands
Glide by the flanks, and reach the broken foe.
Amid their flight, what vengeance from the arm
Of Alpheus falls? O'er all in swift pursuit
Was he renown'd. His active feet had match'd
The son of Peleus in the dusty course;
But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs
Of Polydorus animate his strength
With tenfold vigour. Like the' empurpled moon,
When in eclipse her silver disk hath lost
The wonted light, his buckler's polish'd face
Is now obscur'd; the figur'd bosses drop
In crimson, spouting from his deathful strokes.
As when, with horror wing'd, a whirlwind rends

A shatter'd navy, from the ocean cast,
Enormous fragments hide the level beach;
Such as dejected Persia late beheld
On Thessaly's unnavigable strand:
Thus o'er the champaign Satraps lay bestrewn
By Alpheus, persevering in pursuit
Beyond the pass. Not Phœbus could inflict
On Niobè more vengeance when, incens'd
By her maternal arrogance, which scorn'd
Latona's race, he twang'd his ireful bow,
And one by one, from youth and beauty, hurl'd
Her sons to Pluto; nor severer pangs
That mother felt, than pierc'd the generous soul
Of Hyperanthes, while his noblest friends
On every side lay gasping. With despair
He still contends. The' immortals, from their stand
Behind the' entangling thicket next the pass,
His signal rouses. Ere they clear their way,
Well caution'd Medon from the close defile
Two thousand Locrians pours. An aspect new
The fight assumes. Through implicated shrubs
Confusion waves each banner. Falchions, spears,
And shields, are all encumber'd; till the Greeks
Had forc'd a passage to the yielding foe.
Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,
Wide wasting once the Calydonian fields,
In fury breaking from his gloomy lair,
Rang'd with less havoc through unguarded folds
Than Medon, sweeping down the glittering files,
So vainly styl'd immortal. From the cliff
Divine Melissa and Laconia's king
Enjoy the glories of Oïleus' son.

Fierce Alpheus too, returning from his chase,
Joins in the slaughter. Every Persian falls.
To him the Locrian chief—'Brave Spartan, thanks!
Through thee my purpose is accomplish'd full.
My phalanx here with levell'd rows of spears
Shall guard the shelter'd bushes. Come what may
From Asia's camp, the' assailant, flank'd and driv'n
Down yonder slope, shall perish. Gods of Greece!
You shall behold your fanes profusely deck'd
In splendid offerings from Barbarian spoils,
Won by your free-born supplicants this day.'
This said, he forms his ranks. Their threatening points
Gleam through the thicket, whence the shivering foes
Avert their sight, like passengers dismay'd,
Who on their course by Nile's portentous banks
Descry, in ambush of perfidious reeds,
The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay
Thermopylæ. Dieneces secur'd
The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans show'd:
One tow'rds the plain observ'd the Persian camp;
One, led by Agis, fac'd the' interior pass.
Not yet discourag'd, Hyperanthes strives
The scatter'd host to rally. He exhorts,
Entreats; at length, indignant, thus exclaims—
'Degenerate Persians! to sepulchral dust
Could breath return, your fathers from the tomb
Would utter groans. Inglorious, do ye leave
Behind you Persia's standard, to adorn
Some Grecian temple? Can your splendid cars,
Voluptuous couches, and delicious boards,

Your gold, your gems, ye Satraps, be preserv'd
By cowardice and flight? The eunuch-slave
Will scorn such lords, your women loath your beds.'
Few hear him, fewer follow; while the fight
His unabating courage oft renews,
As oft repuls'd with danger; till, by all
Deserted, mixing in the general rout,
He yields to fortune, and regains the camp.
In short advances, thus the dying tide
Beats for awhile against the shelving strand,
Still by degrees retiring, and at last
Within the bosom of the main subsides.
Though Hyperanthes from the fight was driv'n;
Close to the mountain, whose indented side
There gave the widen'd pass an ample space
For numbers to embattle; still his post
Bold Intaphernes, underneath a cliff,
Against the firm Platæan line maintain'd.
On him look'd down Leonidas, like Death,
When, from his iron cavern call'd by Jove,
He stands gigantic on a mountain's head;
Whence he commands the affrighted earth to quake,
And, crags and forests in his direful grasp
High wielding, dashes on a town below,
Whose deeds of black impiety provoke
The long-enduring gods. Around the verge
Of Œta, curving to a crescent's shape,
The marbles, timbers, fragments, lay amass'd.
The helots, peasants, mariners, attend
In order, nigh Leonidas. They watch
His look. He gives the signal. Rous'd at once,
The force, the skill, activity, and zeal,
Of thousands are combin'd. Down rush the piles.

Trees roll'd on trees, with mingled rock descend,
Unintermitted ruin. Loud resound
The hollow trunks against the mountain's side.
Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes below
Look up aghast, in horror shrink, and die.
Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath the' enormous load,
Lie hid and lost, as never they had known
A name or being. Intaphernes, clad
In regal splendour, progeny of kings,
Who rul'd Damascus and the Syrian palms,
Here slept for ever. Thousands of his train
In that broad space the ruins had not reach'd.
Back to their camp a passage they attempt
Through Lacedæmon's line. Them Agis stopt.
Before his powerful arm Pandates fell,
Sosarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd
His youthful steel in blood. The mightier spear
Of Maron pierc'd battalions, and enlarg'd
The track of slaughter. Backward turn'd the rout,
Nor found a milder fate. The' unwearied swords
Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon,
Who from the hill are wheeling on their flank,
Still flash tremendous. To the shore they fly,
At once envelop'd by successive bands
Of different Grecians. From the gulf profound
Perdition here inevitable frowns,
While there, encircled by a grove of spears,
They stand devoted hecatombs to Mars.
Now not a moment's interval delays
Their general doom; but down the Malian steep
Prone are they hurried to the' expanded arms
Of horror, rising from the oozy deep,

And grasping all their numbers as they fall.
The dire confusion like a storm invades
The chafing surge. Whole troops Bellona rolls
In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge.
O'er all their arms, their ensigns, deep-engulf'd,
With hideous roar the waves for ever close.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

Night coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents. A guard is placed on the Phocian wall, under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady, accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave, who attended her, proves to be Polydorus, brother to Alpheus and Maron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phœnician pirate. He relates, before an assembly of the chiefs, a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Œta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneces, with a party of Lacedæmonians, to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IX.

In sable vesture, spangled o'er with stars,
The night assum'd her throne. Recall'd from war,
Their toil, protracted long, the Greeks forget,
Dissolv'd in silent slumber; all but those
Who watch the' uncertain perils of the dark,
A hundred warriors: Agis was their chief.
High on the wall, intent, the hero sat.
Fresh winds across the undulating bay
From Asia's host the various din convey'd
In one deep murmur, swelling on his ear;
When, by the sound of footsteps down the pass
Alarm'd, he calls aloud—'What feet are these,
Which beat the' echoing pavement of the rock?
Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate.'
A voice replied—'No enemies we come,
But crave admittance in an humble tone.'
The Spartan answers—'Through the midnight shade
What purpose draws your wandering steps abroad?'
To whom the stranger—'We are friends to Greece.
Through thy assistance we implore access
To Lacedæmon's king.' The cautious Greek

Still hesitates; when musically sweet
A tender voice his wondering ear allures.
'O generous warrior! listen to the pray'r
Of one distress'd, whom grief alone hath led
Through midnight shades to these victorious tents;
A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.'
The chief, descending, through the' unfolded gates
Upheld a flaming torch. The light disclos'd
One first in servile garments. Near his side
A woman graceful and majestic stood;
Not with an aspect rivalling the pow'r
Of fatal Helen, or the' ensnaring charms
Of love's soft Queen; but such as far surpass'd
Whate'er the lily blending with the rose,
Spreads on the cheek of beauty, soon to fade;
Such as express'd a mind by wisdom rul'd,
By sweetness temper'd; virtue's purest light
Illumining the countenance divine:
Yet could not soften rigorous fate, nor charm
Malignant fortune to revere the good;
Which oft with anguish rends a spotless heart,
And oft associates wisdom with despair.
In courteous phrase began the chief humane—
'Exalted fair! whose form adorns the night,
Forbear to blame the vigilance of war.
My slow compliance to the rigid laws
Of Mars impute. In me, no longer pause
Shall from the presence of our king withhold
This thy apparent dignity and worth.'
Here ending, he conducts her. At the call
Of his lov'd brother, from his couch arose
Leonidas. In wonder he survey'd
The' illustrious virgin, whom his presence aw'd.
Her eye, submissive, to the ground declin'd,

In veneration of the godlike man.
His mien, his voice, her anxious dread dispel,
Benevolent and hospitable, thus—
'Thy looks, fair stranger, amiable and great,
A mind delineate which from all commands
Supreme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,
By what relentless destiny compell'd,
Thy tender feet the paths of darkness tread;
Rehearse the' afflictions whence thy virtue mourns.'
On her wan cheek a sudden blush arose,
Like day first dawning on the twilight pale;
When, wrapt in grief, these words a passage found—
'If to be most unhappy, and to know
That hope is irrecoverably fled;
If to be great and wretched, may deserve
Commiseration from the brave; behold,
Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
Behold, descended from Darius' loins,
The' afflicted Ariana; and my pray'r
Accept with pity, nor my tears disdain.
First, that I lov'd the best of human race,
Heroic, wise, adorn'd by every art,
Of shame unconscious, doth my heart reveal.
This day, in Grecian arms conspicuous clad,
He fought, he fell. A passion long conceal'd,
For me, alas! within my brother's arms
His dying breath resigning he disclos'd.
Oh! I will stay my sorrows! will forbid
My eyes to stream before thee, and my breast,
O'erwhelm'd by anguish, will from sighs restrain!
For why should thy humanity be griev'd
At my distress, why learn from me to mourn
The lot of mortals, doom'd to pain and woe!

Hear then, O king! and grant my sole request,
To seek his body in the heaps of slain.'
Thus to the hero sued the royal maid,
Resembling Ceres in majestic woe,
When supplicating Jove, from Stygian gloom,
And Pluto's black embraces, to redeem
Her lov'd and lost Proserpina. Awhile
On Ariana fixing stedfast eyes,
These tender thoughts Leonidas recall'd—
'Such are thy sorrows, O! for ever dear,
Who now at Lacedæmon dost deplore
My everlasting absence!'—Then aside
He turn'd and sigh'd. Recovering, he address'd
His brother—'Most beneficent of men,
Attend, assist this princess!' Night retires
Before the purple-winged morn. A band
Is call'd. The well-remember'd spot they find
Where Teribazus from his dying hand
Dropt in their sight his formidable sword.
Soon from beneath a pile of Asian dead
They draw the hero, by his armour known.
Then, Ariana, what transcending pangs
Were thine! what horrors! In thy tender breast
Love still was mightiest. On the bosom cold
Of Teribazus, grief-distracted maid,
Thy beauteous limbs were thrown. Thy snowy hue
The clotted gore disfigur'd. On his wounds
Loose flow'd thy hair, and, bubbling from thy eyes,
Impetuous sorrow lav'd the' empurpled clay.
When forth in groans these lamentations broke—
'O, torn for ever from these weeping eyes!
Thou, who, despairing to obtain a heart
Which then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield
Thy life to fate's inevitable dart

For her, who now in agony reveals
Her tender passion, who repeats her vows
To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own
Unites thy cheek insensible and cold.
Alas! do those unmoving, ghastly orbs,
Perceive my gushing sorrow? Can that heart
At my complaint dissolve the ice of death,
To share my sufferings? Never, never more
Shall Ariana bend a listening ear
To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feast
Her mind on wisdom from thy copious tongue!
Oh! bitter insurmountable distress!'
She could no more. Invincible despair
Suppress'd all utterance. As a marble form,
Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, inclines
The silent head, in imitated woe,
O'er some dead hero whom his country lov'd,
Entranc'd by anguish; o'er the breathless clay
So hung the princess. On the gory breach,
Whence life had issued by the fatal blow,
Mute for a space, and motionless, she gaz'd;
When thus in accents firm: 'Imperial pomp,
Foe to my quiet, take my last farewell!
There is a state where only virtue holds
The rank supreme. My Teribazus there
From his high order must descend to mine.'
Then, with no trembling hand, no change of look,
She drew a poniard, which her garment veil'd;
And instant sheathing in her heart the blade,
On her slain lover silent sunk in death!
The unexpected stroke prevents the care
Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and distress;
Like one who, standing on a stormy beach,

Beholds a foundering vessel by the deep
At once engulf'd, his pity feels and mourns,
Depriv'd of power to save; so Agis view'd
The prostrate pair. He dropt a tear, and thus—
'Oh, much lamented! Heavy on your heads
Hath evil fall'n, which o'er your pale remains
Commands this sorrow from a stranger's eye.
Illustrious ruins! May the grave impart
That peace which life denied! And now receive
This pious office from a hand unknown.'
He spake, unclasping from his shoulders broad
His ample robe. He strew'd the waving folds
O'er each wan visage, turning then, address'd
The slave, in mute dejection standing near—
'Thou, who, attendant on this hapless fair,
Hast view'd this dreadful spectacle, return!
These bleeding relics bear to Persia's king;
Thou with four captives, whom I free from bonds.'
'Art thou a Spartan? (interrupts the slave)
Dost thou command me to return, and pine
In climes unbless'd by liberty or laws?
Grant me to see Leonidas. Alone
Let him decide if, wretched as I seem,
I may not claim protection from this camp.'
'Whoe'er thou art, (rejoins the chief, amaz'd,
But not offended,) thy ignoble garb
Conceal'd a spirit which I now revere.
Thy countenance demands a better lot
Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth,
Unconscious, offer'd. Freedom dwells in Greece,
Humanity and justice. Thou shalt see
Leonidas, their guardian.'—To the king
He leads him straight; presents him in these
words—

'In mind superior to the base attire
Which marks his limbs with shame, a stranger comes,
Who thy protection claims.' The slave subjoins—
'I stand thy suppliant now. Thou soon shalt learn
If I deserve thy favour. I request
To meet the' assembled chieftains of this host.
Oh! I am fraught with tidings which import
The weal of every Grecian.'—Agis swift,
Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
The different leaders. To the tent they speed.
Before them call'd, the stranger thus began—
'O Alpheus! Maron! hither turn your sight,
And know your brother!' From their seats they start:
From either breaks, in ecstasy, the name
Of Polydorus! To his dear embrace
Each fondly strives to rush; but he withstands;
While down his cheek a flood of anguish pours
From his dejected eyes, in torture bent
On that vile garb, dishonouring his form.
At length these accents, intermix'd with groans,
A passage found, while mute attention gaz'd:—
'You first should know if this unhappy slave
Yet merits your embraces.' Then approach'd
Leonidas. Before him all recede,
Ev'n Alpheus' self, and yields his brother's hand,
Which in his own the regal hero press'd.
Still Polydorus on his gloomy front
Repugnance stern to consolation bore;
When thus the king with majesty benign—
'Lo! every heart is open to thy worth.
Injurious fortune and enfeebling time,

By servitude and grief, severely try
A liberal spirit. Tried, but not subdued,
Dost thou appear. Whatever be our lot
Is Heaven's appointment. Patience best becomes
The citizen and soldier. Let the sight
Of friends and brethren dissipate thy gloom.'
Of men the gentlest, Agis too advanc'd,
Who with increas'd humanity began—
'Now in thy native liberty secure,
Smile on thy past affliction, and relate
What chance restores thy merit to the arms
Of friends and kindred.' Polydorus then—
'I was a Spartan. When my tender prime
On manhood border'd, from Laconia's shores
Snatch'd by Phœnician pirates, I was sold
A slave; by Hyperanthes bought, and giv'n
To Ariana. Gracious was her hand.
But I remain'd a bondman, still estrang'd
From Lacedæmon. Demaratus oft,
In friendly sorrow, would my lot deplore;
Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn'd,
Lost to his country in a servile court,
The centre of corruption; where in smiles
Are painted envy, treachery, and hate,
With rankling malice; where, alone sincere,
The dissolute seek no disguise; where those,
Possessing all a monarch can bestow,
Are far less happy than the meanest heir
To freedom, far more groveling than the slave
Who serves their cruel pride. Yet here the sun
Ten times his yearly circle hath renew'd
Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.
My bloom is pass'd, or, pining in despair,
Untimely wither'd. I at last return

A messenger of fate, who tidings bear
Of desolation.' Here he paus'd in grief
Redoubled; when Leonidas—' Proceed!
Should from thy lips inevitable death
To all be threaten'd, thou art heard by none
Whose dauntless hearts can entertain a thought
But how to fall the noblest.' Thus the king.
The rest in speechless expectation wait.
Such was the solemn silence, which o'erspread
The shrine of Ammon, or Dodona's shades,
When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long
Suspends the counsel, but resumes his tale—
' As I this night accompanied the steps
Of Ariana, near the pass we saw
A restless form, now traversing the way,
Now as a statue rivetted by doubt,
Then on a sudden starting to renew
An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,
He, by the moon which glimmer'd on our heads,
Descried us. Straight advancing, whither bent
Our midnight course he ask'd? I knew the voice
Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd
The venerable exile, and replied—
" Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.
Farewell!" He wept. " Be Heaven thy guide, (he said)
Thrice happy Polydorus; thou again
Mayst visit Sparta, to these eyes denied.
Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,
Say to the Spartans, from their exil'd king,
Although their blind credulity depriv'd
The wretched Demaratus of his home,
From every joy secluded, from his wife,

His offspring torn, his contrymen and friends,
Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide;
Say that ev'n here, where all are kings or slaves,
Amid the riot of flagitious courts,
Not quite extinct, his Spartan spirit glows,
Though grief hath dimm'd its fires. Remembering this,
Report that newly to the Persian host
Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had sought.
He to the monarch magnified his art,
Which by delusive eloquence, had wrought
The Grecks to such despair, that every band
To Persia's sovereign standard would have bow'd,
Had not the spirit of a single chief,
By fear unconquer'd, and on death resolv'd,
Restor'd their valour: therefore, would the king
Trust to his guidance a selected force;
They soon should pierce the' unguarded bounds of Greece
Through a neglected aperture above,
Where no Leonidas should bar their way:
Meantime, by him the treacherous Thebans sent
Assurance of their aid. The' assenting prince
At once decreed two myriads to advance
With Hyperanthes. Every lord besides,
Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,
Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend
From all the nations, with a rival zeal
To enter Greece the foremost." In a sigh
He clos'd—like me.' Tremendous, from his seat
Uprose Diomedon. His eyes were flames.
When swift, on trembling Anaxander, broke
These ireful accents from his livid lips—

'Yet, ere we fall, O traitor! shall this arm
To hell's avenging furies sink thy head!'
All now is tumult. Every bosom swells
With wrath untam'd, and vengeance. Half unsheath'd,
The' impetuous falchion of Platæa flames.
But as the Colchian-sorceress, renown'd
In legends old, or Circé, when they fram'd
A potent spell, to smoothness charm'd the main,
And lull'd Æolian rage by mystic song,
Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,
Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd
The lightest whisper through the magic air;
So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
Confusion listens; ire in silent awe
Subsides. 'Withhold this rashness; (cries the king:)
To proof of guilt let punishment succeed.
Not yet Barbarian shouts our camp alarm.
We still have time for vengeance, time to know
If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,
Or how most glorious perish.' Next arose
Dieneces, and thus the' experienc'd man—
'Ere they surmount our fences, Xerxes' troops
Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly.
The spears of Phocis' guard that secret pass,
To them let instant messengers depart,
And note the hostile progress.' Alpheus here—
'Leonidas! behold, my willing feet
Shall to the Phocians bear thy high commands;
Shall climb the hill to watch the' approaching foe.'
'Thou active son of valour! (quick returns
The chief of Lacedæmon) in my thoughts
For ever present, when the public weal
Requires the swift, the vigilant, and bold;

Go, climb, surmount the rock's aërial height;
Observe the hostile march. A Spartan band,
Dieneces, provide. Thyself conduct
Their speedy succour to our Phocian friends.'
The council rises. For his course prepar'd,
While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,
'O Polydorus! (Alpheus thus in haste)
Long lost, and late recover'd, we must part
Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return
To kiss the sacred soil which gave thee birth,
And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,
I should have sighs to give thee—but farewell!
My country chides me, loitering in thy arms.'
This said he darts along, nor looks behind,
When Polydorus answers—'Alpheus, no!
I have the marks of bondage to erase.
My blood must wash the shameful stain away.'
'We have a father, (Maron interpos'd)
Thy unexpected presence will revive
His heavy age, now childless and forlorn.'
To him the brother with a gloomy frown—
'Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes;
Faint is their light; and vanish'd was my bloom
Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast
Grief will retain a mansion, nor by time
Be dispossess'd. Unceasing shall my soul
Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth,
In slavery exhausted. Life to me
Hath lost its savour.' Then in sullen woe,
His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.
Now in his view Dieneces appear'd
With Sparta's band. Immoveable, his eyes
On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts
'I too, like them, from Lacedæmon spring;

Like them instructed once to poise the spear,
To lift the pondrous shield. Ill-destin'd wretch!
Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink
Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant Fates!
Who have compell'd my free-born hand to change
The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds!
Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,
My ten years' anguish, and the fell despair
Which on my youth have prey'd? Relenting once,
Grant I may bear my buckler to the field,
And (know a Spartan) seek the shades below.'
'Why, to be known a Spartan, must thou seek
The shades below?' impatient Maron spake.
'Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds.
Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth.
Live, and perform the duties which become
A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow
Frowns gloomy, still unyielding. He, who leads
Our band, all fathers of a noble race,
Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close
Without an offspring to uphold the state.'
'He will, (replies the brother in a glow,
Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek;)
He will permit me to complete by death
The measure of my duty: will permit
Me to atchieve a service, which no hand
But mine can render, to adorn his fall
With double lustre, strike the barbarous foe
With endless terror, and avenge the shame
Of an enslav'd Laconian.'—Closing here
His words mysterious, quick he turn'd away
To find the tent of Agis. There his hand
In grateful sorrow minister'd her aid;

While the humane, the hospitable care
Of Agis, gently by her lover's corse,
On one sad bier, the pallid beauties laid
Of Ariana. He from bondage freed
Four eastern captives, whom his generous arm
That day had spar'd in battle; then began
This solemn charge:—'You, Persians, whom my sword
Acquir'd in war, unransom'd, shall depart.
To you I render freedom, which you sought
To rest from me. One recompense I ask,
And one alone. Transport to Asia's camp
This bleeding princess. Bid the Persian king
Weep o'er this flower, untimely cut in bloom;
Then say, the' all-judging powers have thus ordain'd.
Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth
Leads desolation; o'er the nations spreads
Calamity and tears; thou first shalt mourn,
And through thy house destruction first shall range.'
Dismiss'd, they gain the rampart, where on guard
Was Dithyrambus posted. He perceiv'd
The mournful bier approach. To him the fate
Of Ariana was already told.
He met the captives with a moisten'd eye
Full bent on Teribazus, sigh'd, and spake—
'O that, assuming with those Grecian arms
A Grecian spirit, thou in scorn hadst look'd
On princes! Worth like thine, from slavish courts
Withdrawn, had ne'er been wasted to support
A king's injustice. Then a gentler lot
Had blest thy life, or, dying, thou hadst known,
How sweet is death for liberty. A Greek
Affords these friendly wishes, though his head

Had lost the honours gather'd from thy fall,
When fortune favour'd, or propitious Jove
Smil'd on the better cause. Ill-fated pair!
Whom in compassion's purest dew I lave,
But that my hand infix'd the deathful wound,
And must be grievous to your loathing shades,
From all the neighbouring vallies would I cull
Their fairest growth to strew your hearse with flow'rs.
Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs!
May peace surround your ashes! May your shades
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats!'
He ceas'd, in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK X.

THE ARGUMENT.

Medon convenes the Locrian commanders, and harangues them; repairs at midnight to his sister Melissa in the temple, and receives from her the first intelligence that the Persians were in actual possession of the upper Straits, which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibœus brings her tidings of her father's death. She strictly enjoins her brother to preserve his life by a timely retreat, and recommends the enforcement of her advice to the prudence and zeal of Melibœus. In the morning the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Xerxes, soon after a report had reached the camp that great part of his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argestes to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argestes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy in secret to Leonidas, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. Alpheus returns, and declares that the enemy was master of the passages in the hills, and would arrive at Thermopylæ the next morning; upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the troops, except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias, refuse to depart: then, to relieve the perplexity of Medon on this occasion, he transfers to him the supreme command, dismisses Argestes, orders the companions of his own fate to be ready in arms by sunset, and retires to his pavilion.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK X.

The Grecian leaders, from the council risen,
Among the troops dispersing, by their words,
Their looks undaunted, warm the coldest heart
Against new dangers threatening. To his tent
The Locrian captains Medon swift convenes,
Exhorting thus—'O, long-approv'd my friends,
You, who have seen my father in the field
Triumphant, bold assistants of my arm
In labours not inglorious, who this day
Have rais'd fresh trophies, be prepar'd! If help
Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,
You will the next be summon'd. Locris lies
To ravage first expos'd. Your ancient fane,
Your goddesses, your priestess half-ador'd,
The daughter of Oïleus, from your swords
Protection claim against an impious foe.'
All anxious for Melissa, he dismiss'd
The' applauding veterans; to the sacred cave
Then hasten'd. Under heaven's night-shaded cop
He mus'd. Melissa in her holy place
How to approach, with inauspicious steps,
How to accost, his pensive mind revolv'd:
When Mycon, pious vassal of the fane,
Descending through the cavern, at the sight

Of Medon stopt, and thus—'Thy presence, lord,
The priestess calls. To Lacedæmon's king
I bear a message, suffering no delay.'
He quits the Chief, whose rapid feet ascend,
Soon entering where the pedestal displays
Thy form, Calliopè sublime. The lyre,
Whose accents immortality confer,
Thy fingers seem to wake. On either side
The snowy gloss of Parian marble shows
Four of thy sisters through surrounding shade.
Before each image is a virgin plac'd.
Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,
Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam
The dead obscurity of night. Apart
The priestess thoughtful sits. Thus Medon breaks
The solemn silence—'Anxious for thy state,
Without a summons, to thy pure abode
I was approaching. Deities who know
The present, past, and future, let my lips
Unblam'd have utterance! Thou, my Sister, hear!
Thy breast let wisdom strengthen. Impious foes
Through Œta now are passing.' She replies—
'Are passing, brother! they, alas! are pass'd,
Are in possession of the upper Strait.—
Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.
A favour'd goat, conductor of my herd,
Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post
To Phocians left, and penetrates to Greece.
Him Mycon following, by a hostile band,
Light arm'd forerunners of a numerous host,
Was seiz'd. By fear of menac'd torments forc'd,
He show'd a passage up that mountain's side
Whose length of wood o'ershades the Phocian land.
To dry and sapless trunks in different parts

Fire, by the Persians artfully applied,
Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop return'd,
Detaining Mycon. Now the mountain blaz'd.
The Phocians, ill-commanded, left their post,
Alarm'd, confus'd. More distant ground they chose.
In blind delusion forming there, they spread
Their ineffectual banners, to repel
Imagin'd peril from those fraudful lights,
By stratagem prepar'd. A real foe
Meantime secur'd the undefended pass.
This Mycon saw. Escaping thence to me,
He, by my orders, hastens to inform
Leonidas.'—She paus'd. Like one, who sees
The forked lightning into shivers rive
A knotted oak, or crumble towers to dust,
Aghast was Medon; then, recovering, spake—
'Thou boasted glory of the' Oïlean house!
If e'er thy brother bow'd in reverence due
To thy superior virtues, let his voice
Be now regarded. From the' endanger'd fane,
My sister, fly. Whatever be my lot,
A troop select of Locrians shall transport
Thy sacred person where thy will ordains.'
'Think not of me! (returns the dame:) To Greece
Direct thy zeal. My peasants are conven'd,
That by their labour, when the fatal hour
Requires, with massy fragments I may bar
That cave to human entrance. Best belov'd
Of brothers! now a serious ear incline.
Awhile in Greece, to fortune's wanton gale,
His golden banner shall the Persian king,
Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death
Preserving Sparta, will his spirit leave
To blast the glittering pageant. Medon, live

To share that glory. Thee to perish here
No law, no oracle, enjoins. To die,
Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand
Secure Oïleus from Barbarian force.
To Sparta, mindful of her noble host,
Entrust his reverend head.' The assembled hinds,
Youths, maidens, wives with nurselings at their breasts,
Around her now in consternation stood,
The women weeping, mute, aghast the men.
To them she turns—' You never, faithful race!
Your priestess shall forsake. Melissa here,
Despairing never of the public weal,
For better days in solitude shall wait,
Shall cheer your sadness. My prophetic soul
Sees through time's cloud the liberty of Greece
More stable, more effulgent. In his blood
Leonidas cements the' unshaken base
Of that strong tower, which Athens shall exalt
To cast a shadow o'er the eastern world.'
This utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmost seat
Of sanctity, her solemn steps he bends,
Devout, enraptur'd. In their darkening lamps
The pallid flames are fainting. Dim through mists
The morning peeps. An awful silence reigns.
While Medon pensive from the fane descends,
But instant re-appears. Behind him close
Treads Melibœus, through the cavern's mouth
Ascending, pale in aspect; not unlike
What legends tell of spectres, by the force
Of necromantic sorcery constrain'd;
Through earth's dark bowels, which the spell dis-join'd,
They from death's mansion, in reluctant sloth,

Rose to divulge the secrets of their graves,
Or mysteries of fate. His cheerful brow,
O'erclouded, paleness on his healthful cheek,
A dull, unwonted heaviness of pace,
Portend disastrous tidings. Medon spake—
'Turn, holy sister! By the gods belov'd,
May they sustain thee in this mouruful hour.
Our father, good Oïleus, is no more!'—
'Rehearse thy tidings, swain.'—He takes the word—
'Thou wast not present, when his mind, out-
stretch'd
By zeal for Greece, transported by his joy
To entertain Leonidas, refus'd
Due rest. Old age his ardour had forgot;
To his last waking moment with his guest
In rapturous talk redundant. He at last,
Compos'd and smiling in the' embrace of sleep,
To Pan's protection at the island-fane
Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news,
To you discover'd, from the Chiefs I hide.'
Melissa heard, inclin'd her forehead low
Before the' insculptur'd deities. A sigh
Broke from her heart, these accents from her lips—
'The full of days and honours, through the gate
Of painless slumber is retir'd. His tomb
Shall stand among his fathers, in the shade
Of his own trophies. Placid were his days,
Which flow'd through blessings. As a river pure,
Whose sides are flowery, and whose meadows fair,
Meets in his course a subterranean void;
There dips his silver head, again to rise,
And, rising, glide through flowers and meadows new;
So shall Oïleus, in those happier fields
Where never tempests roar, nor humid clouds

In mists dissolve, nor white-descending flakes
Of winter violate the' eternal green;
Where never gloom of trouble shades the mind,
Nor gust of passion heaves the quiet breast,
Nor dews of grief are sprinkled. Thou art gone,
Host of divine Leonidas on earth!
Art gone before him to prepare the feast,
Immortalizing virtue.' Silent here,
Around her head she wraps her hallow'd pall.
Her prudent virgins interpose a hymn,
Not in a plaintive, but majestic flow,
To which their fingers, sweeping o'er the chords,
The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils;
Then, with a voice, a countenance compos'd—
'Go, Medon, pillar of the' Oïlean house!
New cares, new duties, claim thy precious life.
Perform the pious obsequies. Let tears,
Let groans, be absent from the sacred dust
Which heaven in life so favour'd, more in death.
A term of righteous days, an envied urn,
Like his, for Medon, is Melissa's prayer!
Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank
Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord.
My benediction shall reward thy zeal.'
Sooth'd by the blessings of such perfect lips,
They both depart. And now the climbing sun
To Xerxes' tent discover'd from afar
The Persian captives with their mournful load.
Before them rumour, through her sable trump,
Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice
To spread the tidings of disastrous fate
Along Spercheos. As a vapour black,
Which from the distant, horizontal verge
Ascending, nearer still and nearer bends

To higher lands its progress, there condens'd,
Throws darkness o'er the valleys, while the face
Of nature saddens round; so, step by step,
In motion slow, the' advancing bier diffus'd
A solemn sadness o'er the camp. A hedge
Of trembling spears on either hand is form'd.
Tears, underneath his iron-pointed cone,
The Sacian drops. The Caspian savage feels
His heart transpierc'd, and wonders at the pain.
In Xerxes' presence are the bodies plac'd;
Nor he forbids. His agitated breast
All night had weigh'd against his future hopes
His present losses, his defeated ranks,
By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abash'd,
His fleet thrice-worsted, torn by storms, reduc'd
To half its number. When he slept, in dreams
He saw the haggard dead, which floated round
The' adjoining strands. Disasters new, their ghosts
In sullen frowns, in shrill upbraidings, bode.
Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,
He in dejection had already lost
His kingly pride, the parent of disdain
And cold indifference to human woes.
Not ev'n beside his sister's nobler corse
Her humble lover could awake his scorn.
The captives told their piercing tale. He heard;
He felt awhile compassion. But ere long
Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast.
His former gloom redoubles. For himself
His anxious bosom heaves, oppress'd by fear,
Lest he, with all his splendour, should be cast
A prey to fortune. Thoughtful near the throne
Laconia's exile waits, to whom the king—
'O Demaratus! what will fate ordain?

Lo! fortune turns against me. What shall check
Her further malice, when her daring stride
Invades my house with ravage, and profanes
The blood of great Darius? I have sent
From my unguarded side the chosen band,
My bravest chiefs, to pass the desert hill;
Have to the conduct of a Malian spy
My hopes intrusted. May not there the Greeks,
In opposition more tremendous still,
More ruinous, than yester sun beheld,
Maintain their post invincible, renew
Their stony thunder in augmented rage,
And send whole quarries down the craggy steeps,
Again to crush my army? Oh! unfold
Thy secret thoughts, nor hide the harshest truth.
Say, what remains to hope?' The exile here—
'Too well, O monarch! do thy fears presage
What may befall thy army. If the Greeks,
Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a pass
Accessible and practis'd, could repel
With such destruction their unnumber'd foes;
What scenes of havoc may untrodden paths,
Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford?'
Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat.
Not less unman'd than Xerxes, from his place
Uprose Argestes; but, concealing fear,
These artful words deliver'd—'If the king,
Propitious, wills to spare his faithful bands,
Nor spread at large the terrors of his power,
More gentle means of conquest than by arms,
Nor less secure, may artifice supply.
Renown'd Darius, thy immortal sire,
Bright in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain
The fields of proud Euphrates with his host

O'erspread. At length, confiding in the wiles
Of Zopyrus, the mighty prince subdued
The Babylonian ramparts. Who shall count
The thrones and states by stratagem o'erturn'd?
But, if corruption join her powerful aid,
Not one can stand. What race of men possess
That probity, that wisdom, which the veil
Of craft shall never blind, nor proffer'd wealth,
Nor splendid power, seduce? O Xerxes! born
To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find,
Through thy unbounded sway, no dazzling gift
Which may allure Leonidas? Dispel
The cloud of sadness from those sacred eyes.
Great monarch! proffer to Laconia's chief
What may thy own magnificence declare,
And win his friendship. O'er his native Greece
Invest him sovereign. Thus procure his sword
For thy succeeding conquests.' Xerxes here,
As from a trance awakening, swift replies—
'Wise are thy dictates. Fly to Sparta's chief.
Argestes, fall before him. Bid him join
My arms, and reign o'er every Grecian state.'
He scare had finish'd, when in haste approach'd
Artuchus. Startled at the ghastly stage
Of death, that guardian of the Persian fair
Thus in a groan—'Thou deity malign,
O Arimanius, what a bitter draught
For my sad lips thy cruelty hath mix'd!
Is this the flower of women, to my charge
So lately given? Oh! princess, I have rang'd
The whole Spherchean valley, woods and caves,
In quest of thee, found here a lifeless corse.
Astonishment and horror lock my tongue.'
Pride now, reviving in the monarch's breast,

Dispell'd his black despondency awhile,
With gall more black effacing from his heart
Each merciful impression. Stern he spake—
'Remove her, satrap, to the female train.
Let them the due solemnities perform.
But never she, by Mithra's light I swear,
Shall sleep in Susa with her kindred dust,
Who by ignoble passions hath debas'd
The blood of Xerxes. Greece beheld her shame;
Let Greece behold her tomb. The low-born slave,
Who dar'd to Xerxes' sister lift his hopes,
On some bare crag expose.' The Spartan here—
'My royal patron, let me speak—and die,
If such thy will. This cold, disfigur'd clay
Was late thy soldier, gallantly who fought,
Who nobly perish'd, long the dearest friend
Of Hyperanthes, hazarding his life
Now in thy cause. O'er Persians thou dost reign;
None more than Persians venerate the brave!'
'Well hath he spoke; (Artuchus firm subjoins:)
But, if the king his rigour will inflict
On this dead warrior, Heaven o'erlook the deed,
Nor on our heads accumulate fresh woes!
The shatter'd fleet, the' intimidated camp,
The band select, through Œta's dangerous wilds
At this dread crisis struggling, must obtain
Support from heaven, or Asia's glory falls.'
Fell pride, recoiling at these awful words
In Xerxes' frozen bosom, yields to fear,
Resuming there the sway. He grants the corse
To Demaratus. Forth Artuchus moves
Behind the bier, uplifted by his train.
Argestes, parted from his master's side,
Ascends a car; and, speeding o'er the beach,

Sees Artemisia. She, the ashes pale
Of slaughter'd Carians, on the pyre consum'd,
Was then collecting for the funeral vase
In exclamation thus—' My subjects, lost
On earth, descend to happier climes below—
The fawning, dastard counsellors, who left
Your worth deserted in the hour of need,
May kites disfigure, may the wolf devour—
Shade of my husband! thou salute in smiles
These gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,
Nor less to me. They tidings will report
Of Artemisia, to revive thy love—
May wretches like Argestes never clasp
Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!
May their unburied limbs dismiss their ghosts
To wail for ever on the banks of Styx!'
Then, turning tow'rd her son—' Come, virtuous boy,
Let us transport these relics of our friends
To yon tall bark, in pendent sable clad.
They, if her keel be destin'd to return,
Shall in paternal monuments repose.
Let us embark. Till Xerxes shuts his ear
To false Argestes, in her vessel hid
Shall Artemisia's gratitude lament
Her bounteous Sovereign's fate. Leander, mark!
The Doric virtues are not eastern plants.
Them foster still within thy generous breast;
But keep in covert from the blaze of courts;
Where flattery's guile, in oily words profuse,
In action tardy, o'er the' ingenuous tongue,
The arm of valour, and the faithful heart,
Will ever triumph. Yet my soul enjoys

Her own presage, that destiny reserves
An hour for my revenge.' Concluding here,
She gains the fleet. Argestes sweeps along
On rapid wheels from Artemisia's view;
Like Night, protectress foul of heinous deeds,
With treason, rape, and murder, at her heel,
Before the eye of Morn retreating swift,
To hide her loathsome visage. Soon he reach'd
Thermopylæ; descending from his car,
Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent
Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news
By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart
With Polydorus had consulted long
On high attempts; and, now sequester'd, sat
To ruminate on vengeance. At his feet
Prone fell the satrap, and began—'The will
Of Xerxes bends me prostrate to the earth,
Before thy presence. Great and matchless Chief!
Thus says the lord of Asia, "Join my arms:
Thy recompense is Greece. Her fruitful plains,
Her generous steeds, her flocks, her numerous towns,
Her sons, I render to thy sovereign hand."—
And, O illustrious warrior! heed my words.
Think on the bliss of royalty, the pomp
Of courts, their endless pleasures, trains of slaves,
Who restless watch for thee and thy delights.
Think on the glories of unrivall'd sway.
Look on the' Ionic, on the' Æolian Greeks.
From them their phantom Liberty is flown;
While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' power,
Some favour'd chief presides; exalted state,
Ne'er given by envious freedom. On his head
He bears the gorgeous diadem; he sees

His equals once, in adoration stoop
Beneath his footstool. What superior beams
Will from thy temples blaze, when general Greece,
In noblest states abounding, calls thee lord,
Thee only worthy! How will each rejoice
Around thy throne, and hail the' auspicious day
When thou, distinguish'd by the Persian king,
Didst in thy sway consenting nations bless,
Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,
Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames!'
Leonidas replies not, but commands
The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent,
To summon all the Grecians. He obeys.
The king uprises from his seat, and bids
The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,
Surrounded soon by each assembling band;
When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake—
'Here, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat
That, to obtain my friendship, Asia's prince
To me hath proffer'd sovereignty o'er Greece:
Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve
That Greece unconquer'd which your king bestows;
Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains.
The indignation, painted on their looks,
Their generous scorn, may answer for their Chief.
Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd
To vassalage and baseness, hear.—The pomp,
The arts of pleasure in despotic courts,
I spurn, abhorrent! In a spotless heart
I look for pleasure. I from righteous deeds
Derive my splendour. No adoring crowd,
No purpled slaves, no mercenary spears,
My state embarrass. I in Sparta rule
By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown

To Xerxes, public confidence and love.
No pale suspicion of the' empoison'd bowl,
The' assassin's poniard, or provok'd revolt,
Chase from my decent couch the peace denied
To his resplendent canopy. Thy king,
Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling slave,
Whose embassy was treason, I despise,
And therefore spare.' Diomedon subjoins—
' Our marble temples these Barbarians waste,
A crime less impious than a bare attempt
Of sacrilege on virtue! Grant my suit,
Thou living temple, where the goddess dwells.
To me consign the caitiff. Soon the winds
Shall parch his limbs on Œta's tallest pine.'
Amidst his fury suddenly return'd
The speed of Alpheus. All, suspended, fix'd
On him their eyes, impatient. He began—
' I am return'd a messenger of ill.
Close to the passage, opening into Greece,
That post committed to the Phocian guard,
O'erhangs a bushy cliff. A station there
Behind the shrubs by dead of night I took,
Though not in darkness. Purple was the face
Of heaven. Beneath my feet the valleys glow'd.
A range immense of wood-invested hills,
The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames;
An act of froward chance, or crafty foes,
To cast dismay. The crackling pines I heard;
Their branches sparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
In hillocks embers rose. Embodied fire,
As from unnumber'd furnaces, I saw
Mount high, through vacant trunks of headless oaks,
Broad-bas'd, and dry with age. Barbarian helms,

Shields, javelins, sabres, gleaming from below,
Full soon discover'd to my tortur'd sight
The straits in Persia's power. The Phocian Chief,
Whate'er the cause, relinquishing his post,
Was to a neighbouring eminence remov'd;
There, by the foe neglected or contemn'd,
Remain'd in arms, and neither fled nor fought.
I stay'd for day-spring; then the Persians mov'd.
To-morrow's sun will see their numbers here.'
He said no more. Unutterable fear
In horrid silence wraps the listening crowd,
Aghast, confounded. Silent are the Chiefs,
Who feel no terror; yet, in wonder fix'd,
Thick-wedg'd, enclose Leonidas around,
Who thus in calmest elocution spake—
'I now behold the oracle fulfill'd.
Then art thou near, thou glorious, sacred hour,
Which shalt my country's liberty secure.
Thrice hail, thou solemn period! Thee the tongues
Of virtue, fame, and freedom, shall proclaim,
Shall celebrate, in ages yet unborn.
Thou godlike offspring of a godlike sire,
To him my kindest greetings, Medon, bear.
Farewell, Megistias, holy friend, and brave!
Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief,
Demophilus, farewell! Farewell to thee,
Invincible Diomedon! to thee,
Unequall'd Dithyrambus! and to all,
Ye other dauntless warriors, who may claim
Praise from my lips, and friendship from my heart!
You, after all the wonders which your swords
Have here accomplish'd, will enrich your names
By fresh renown. Your valour must complete
What our's begins. Here first the' astonish'd foe

On dying Spartans shall, with terror, gaze,
And tremble, while he conquers. Then, by fate
Led from his dreadful victory to meet
United Greece in phalanx o'er the plain,
By your avenging spears himself shall fall.'
Forth from the' assembly strides Platæa's chief—
'By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heaven supreme,
By my fair name, unsullied yet, I swear
Thine eye, Leonidas, shall ne'er behold
Diomedon forsake thee. First let strength
Desert my limbs, and fortitude my heart.
Did I not face the Marathonian war?
Have I not seen Thermopylæ? What more
Can fame bestow, which I should wait to share?
Where can I, living, purchase brighter praise
Than dying here? What more illustrious tomb
Can I obtain than, buried in the heaps
Of Persians, fall'n my victims, on this rock
To lie, distinguish'd by a thousand wounds?'
He ended; when Demophilus—'O king
Of Lacedæmon, pride of human race,
Whom none e'er equall'd but the seed of Jove,
Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,
Lo, I am old! With faltering steps I tread
The prone descent of years. My country claim'd
My youth, my ripeness. Feeble age but yields
An empty name of service. What remains
For me, unequal to the winged speed
Of active hours, which court the swift and young?
What eligible wish can wisdom form,
But to die well? Demophilus shall close
With thee, O hero! on this glorious earth
His eve of life.' The youth of Thespia next
Address'd Leonidas—'O first of Greeks!

Me too think worthy to attend thy fame
With this most dear, this venerable man,
For ever honour'd from my tenderest age,
E'en till on life's extremity we part.
Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd.
Should the Barbarian in his triumph mark
My youthful limbs among the gory heaps,
Perhaps remembrance may unnerve his arm
In future fields of contest with a race,
To whom the flower, the blooming joys of life
Are less alluring than a noble death.'
To him his second parent—'Wilt thou bleed,
My Dithyrambus? But I here withhold
All counsel from thee, who art wise as brave.
I know thy magnanimity. I read
Thy generous thoughts. Decided is thy choice.
Come then, attendants on a godlike shade,
When to the' Elysian ancestry of Greece
Descends her great protector, we will show
To Harmatides an illustrious son,
And no unworthy brother. We will link
Our shields together. We will press the ground,
Still undivided in the arms of death.
So, if the' attentive traveller we draw
To our cold relics, wondering, shall he trace
The different scene; then, pregnant with applause,
"O wise old man! (exclaim) the hour of fate
Well didst thou choose; and, O unequall'd youth!
Who for thy country didst thy bloom devote,
May'st thou remain for ever dear to fame!
May time rejoice to name thee! O'er thy urn
May everlasting peace her pinion spread".'
This said, the hero with his lifted shield
His face o'ershades; he drops a secret tear:

Not this a tear of anguish, but deriv'd
From fond affection, grown mature with time,
Awak'd a manly tenderness alone,
Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.
A stream of duty, gratitude, and love,
Flow'd from the heart of Harmatides' son,
Addressing straight Leonidas, whose looks
Declar'd unspeakable applause—'O king
Of Lacedæmon! now distribute praise
From thy accustom'd justice, small to me,
To him a portion large. His guardian care,
His kind instruction, his example, train'd
My infancy, my youth. From him I learn'd
To live unspotted. Could I less than learn
From him to die with honour?' Medon hears.
Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts,
Strong heaves his manly bosom, under awe
Of wise Melissa, torn by friendship, fir'd
By such example high. In dubious state
So rolls a vessel, when the' inflated waves
Her planks assail, and winds her canvass rend;
The rudder labours, and requires a hand
Of firm, deliberate skill. The generous king
Perceives the hero's struggle, and prepares
To interpose relief; when instant came
Dieneces before them. Short he spake—
'Barbarian myriads through the secret pass
Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn
Expect them here. My slender force I spar'd:
There to have died was useless. We return
With thee to perish. Union of our strength
Will render more illustrious to ourselves,
And to the foe more terrible, our fall.'
Megistias last accosts Laconia's king—

'Thou, whom the gods have chosen to exalt
Above mankind in virtue and renown,
O call not me presumptuous, who implore
Among these heroes thy regardful ear!
To Lacedæmon I a stranger came,
There found protection. There to honours rais'd,
I have not yet the benefit repaid.
That now the generous Spartans may behold
In me their large beneficence not vain,
Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.'
'Not so, Megistias; (interpos'd the king)
Thou and thy son retire.' Again the seer—
'Forbid it, thou eternally ador'd;
O Jove! confirm my persevering soul,
Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,
When to my bounteous patrons I may show
That I deserv'd their favour. Thou, my child,
Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,
And my paternal tenderness revere.
Thou from these ranks withdraw thee, to my use
Thy arms surrendering. Fortune will supply
New proofs of valour. Vanquish then, or find
A glorious grave; but spare thy father's eye
The bitter anguish to behold thy youth
Untimely bleed before him.' Grief suspends
His speech, and interchangeably their arms
Impart the last embraces. Either weeps,
The hoary parent and the blooming son.
But from his temples the pontific wreath
Megistias now unloosens. He resigns
His hallow'd vestments; while the youth in tears
The helmet o'er his parent's snowy locks,
O'er his broad chest adjusts the radiant mail.
Dieneces was nigh. Oppress'd by shame,

His downcast visage Menalippus hid
From him, who cheerful thus—'Thou needst not blush.
Thou hear'st thy father and the king command,
What I suggested, thy departure hence.
Train'd by my care, a soldier thou return'st.
Go, practise my instructions. Oft in fields
Of future conflict may thy prowess call
Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewell!'
While such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
To die with glory, animate the Greeks,
Far different thoughts possess Argestes' soul.
Amaze and mingled terror chill his blood.
Cold drops, distill'd from every pore, bedew
His shivering flesh. His bosom pants. His knees
Yield to their burden. Ghastly pale his cheeks;
Pale are his lips, and trembling. Such the minds
Of slaves corrupt; on them the beauteous face
Of virtue turns to horror. But these words
From Lacedæmon's chief the wretch relieve—
'Return to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock
The Grecians, faithful to their trust, await
His chosen myriads. Tell him, thou hast seen
How far the lust of empire is below
A freeborn spirit; that my death, which seals
My country's safety, is indeed a boon
His folly gives, a precious boon, which Greece
Will by perdition to his throne repay.'
He said. The Persian hastens through the pass.
Once more the stern Diomedon arose.
Wrath overcast his forehead while he spake—
'Yet more must stay and bleed. Detested Thebes
Ne'er shall receive her traitors back. This spot
Shall see their perfidy aton'd by death,

Ev'n from that power to which their abject hearts
Have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope,
Ye vile deserters of the public weal,
Ye coward slaves, that, mingled in the heaps
Of generous victims to their country's good,
You shall your shame conceal. Whoe'er shall pass
Along this field of glorious slain, and mark
For veneration every nobler corse,
His heart though warm in rapturous applause,
Awhile shall curb the transport, to repeat
His execrations o'er such impious heads,
On whom that fate, to others yielding fame,
Is infamy and vengeance.' Dreadful thus
On the pale Thebans sentence he pronounc'd.
Like Rhadamanthus, from the' infernal seat
Of judgment, which inexorably dooms
The guilty dead to ever-during pain;
While Phlegethon his flaming volumes rolls
Before their sight, and ruthless furies shake
Their hissing serpents. All the Greeks assent
In clamours, echoing through the concave rock.
Forth Anaxander in the' assembly stood,
Which he address'd with indignation feign'd:
'If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
Lo! I appear before you, to demand
Why these my brave companions, who alone
Among the Thebans, through dissuading crowds,
Their passage forc'd to join your camp, should bear
The name of traitors? By an exil'd wretch
We are traduc'd; by Demaratus, driv'n
From Spartan confines, who hath meanly sought
Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn
Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before
Held him unworthy of his native sway,

Should trust him now, and doubt auxiliar-friends?
Injurious man! We scorn the thoughts of flight.
Let Asia bring her numbers; unconstrain'd,
We will confront them, and for Greece expire.'
  Thus in the garb of virtue he adorn'd
Necessity. Laconia's king perceiv'd,
Through all its fair disguise, the traitor's heart.
So, when at first mankind in science rude
Rever'd the moon, as bright in native beams,
Some sage, who walk'd with nature through her works,
By wisdom led, discern'd the various orb,
Dark in itself, in foreign splendours clad.
  Leonidas concludes—'Ye Spartans! hear;
Hear you, O Grecians! in our lot by choice
Partakers, destin'd to enrol your names
In time's eternal record, and enhance
Your country's lustre: lo! the noontide blaze
Inflames the broad horizon. Each retire;
Each in his tent invoke the power of sleep,
To brace his vigour, to enlarge his strength
For long endurance. When the sun descends,
Let each appear in arms. You, brave allies
Of Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ's towers,
Arcadians, Locrians, must not yet depart.
While we repose, embattled wait. Retreat
When we our tents abandon. I resign
To great Oïleus' son supreme command.
Take my embraces, Æschylus! The fleet
Expects thee. To Themistocles report
What thou hast seen and heard.' 'O thrice farewell!'
The' Athenian answer'd—'To yourselves, my friends,
Your virtues immortality secure,
Your bright examples victory to Greece.'

Retaining these injunctions, all dispers'd;
While in his tent Leonidas remain'd
Apart with Agis, whom he thus bespake—
'Yet in our fall the ponderous hand of Greece
Shall Asia feel. This Persian's welcome-tale
Of us, inextricably doom'd her prey,
As by the force of sorcery, will wrap
Security around her, will suppress
All sense, all thought, of danger. Brother, know
That, soon as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n
Withdraws her shining lamp, through Asia's host
Shall massacre and desolation rage.
Yet not to base associates will I trust
My vast design. Their perfidy might warn
The unsuspecting foe, our fairest fruits
Of glory thus be wither'd. Ere we move,
While, on the solemn sacrifice intent,
As Lacedæmon's ancient laws ordain,
Our prayers we offer to the tuneful nine,
Thou whisper, through the willing ranks of Thebes,
Slow, and in silence, to disperse and fly.'
Now, left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,
The Spartan king thus meditates alone—
'My fate is now impending. O my soul!
What more auspicious period couldst thou choose
For death than now, when, beating high in joy,
Thou tell'st me I am happy? If to live,
Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know
The purest bliss; if she her charms displays,
Still lovely, still unfading, still serene,
To youth, to age, to death; whatever be
Those other climes of happiness unchang'd,
Which heaven in dark futurity conceals,
Still here, O virtue! thou art all our good.

Oh! what a black, unspeakable reverse
Must the unrighteous, must the tyrant prove?
What in the struggle of departing day,
When life's last glimpse, extinguishing, presents
Unknown, inextricable gloom? But how
Can I explain the terrors of a breast
Where guilt resides? Leonidas, forego
The horrible conception, and again
Within thy own felicity retire;
Bow grateful down to him, who form'd thy mind
Of crimes unfruitful, never to admit
The black impression of a guilty thought.
Else could I fearless, by deliberate choice,
Relinquish life? This calm from minds deprav'd
Is ever absent. Oft in them the force
Of some prevailing passion for a time
Suppresses fear. Precipitate they lose
The sense of danger; when dominion, wealth,
Or purple pomp, enchant the dazzled sight,
Pursuing still the joys of life alone.
But he, who calmly seeks a certain death,
When duty only, and the general good,
Direct his courage, must a soul possess,
Which, all content deducing from itself,
Can, by unerring virtue's constant light,
Discern when death is worthy of his choice.
The man, thus great and happy, in the scope
Of his large mind is stretch'd beyond his date.
Ev'n on this shore of being, he in thought
Supremely bless'd, anticipates the good,
Which late posterity from him derives.'

At length the hero's meditations close.
The swelling transport of his heart subsides
In soft oblivion; and the silken plumes
Of sleep envelop his extended limbs.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, rising before sun-set, dismisses the forces under the command of Medon; but, observing a reluctance in him to depart, reminds him of his duty, and gives him an affectionate farewell. He then relates to his own select band a dream, which is interpreted by Megistias; arms himself, and marches, in procession with his whole troop, to an altar newly raised on a neighbouring meadow; there offers a sacrifice to the Muses: he invokes the assistance of those goddesses; he animates his companions; then, placing himself at their head, leads them against the enemy in the dead of the night.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XI.

The day was closing. Agis left his tent.
He sought his godlike brother. Him he found
Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch. His looks retain'd
The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts,
To gladden sleep. So smile soft evening-skies,
Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer's suns
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport fill'd
The eye of Agis; friendship swell'd his heart;
His yielding knee in veneration bent;
The hero's hand he kiss'd, then fervent thus—
'O excellence ineffable! receive
This secret homage; and may gentle sleep
Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,
I may fall down before thee.' He concludes
In adoration of his friend divine,
Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.
So, when the rising sun resumes his state,
Some white-rob'd magus on Euphrates' side,
Or Indian seer on Ganges, prostrate falls
Before the' emerging glory, to salute
That radiant emblem of the' immortal mind.
Uprise both heroes. From their tents in arms
Appear the bands select. The other Greeks
Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.

Melissa's dictates he forgets awhile.
All inattentive to the warning voice
Of Melibœus, earnest he surveys
Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal
In good Oïleus' offspring brings the sire
To full remembrance in that solemn hour,
And draws these cordial accents from the king—
'Approach me, Locrian! In thy look I trace
Consummate faith and love. But, vers'd in arms,
Against thy general's orders wouldst thou stay?
Go, prove to kind Oïleus that my heart
Of him was mindful, when the gates of death
I barr'd against his son. Yon gallant Greeks,
To thy commanding care from mine transfer'd,
Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair
To Lacedæmon. Thither lead thy Sire.
Say to her senate, to her people tell,
Here didst thou leave their countrymen and king,
On death resolv'd, obedient to the laws.'
The Locrian chief, restraining tears, replies—
'My sire, left slumbering in the island-fane,
Awoke no more.'—'Then joyful I shall meet
Him soon;' the king made answer:—'Let thy worth
Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,
Thee live. Farewell!'—Now Medon's grief, o'er-aw'd
By wisdom, leaves his long-suspended mind
To firm decision. He departs, prepar'd
For all the duties of a man, by deeds
To prove himself the friend of Sparta's king,
Melissa's brother, and Oïleus' son.
The generous victims of the public weal
Assembled now, Leonidas salutes,
His pregnant soul disburdening—'O, thrice hail!
Surround me, Grecians; to my words attend.—

This evening's sleep no sooner press'd my brows,
Than o'er my head the empyreal form
Of heaven-enthron'd Alcides was display'd.
I saw his magnitude divine. His voice
I heard, his solemn mandate to arise.
I rose. He bade me follow. I obey'd.
A mountain's summit, clear'd from mist or cloud,
We reach'd in silence. Suddenly the howl
Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing shriek,
The yell of every beast and bird of prey,
Discordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.
A surface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood,
Beyond my view illimitably stretch'd,
One vast expanse of horror. There, supine,
Of huge dimension, covering half the plain,
A giant corse lay mangled, red with wounds,
Delv'd in the' enormous flesh, which, bubbling, fed
Ten thousand thousand grisly beaks and jaws,
Insatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd;
When from behind I heard a second sound,
Like surges tumbling o'er a craggy shore.
Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd
With riven keels and shrouds, with shiver'd oars,
With arms and weltering carcases bestrewn,
Innumerous. The billows foam'd in blood.
But where the waters, unobserv'd before,
Between two adverse shores, contracting roll'd
A stormy current, on the beach forlorn
One of majestic stature I descried,
In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent
On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name
He sounded forth in execrations loud;
Then rent his splendid garments; then, his head
In rage divested of its graceful hairs.

Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,
Which, mounted high on boistrous waves, approach'd.
With indignation, with reluctant grief,
Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd
Amid the perils of the frowning deep.
" O thou! by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,
(I here exclaim'd) instruct me. What produc'd
This desolation?" Hercules replied;
" Let thy astonish'd eye again survey
The scene thy soul abhorr'd." I look'd. I saw
A land where plenty, with disporting hands,
Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn;
Where bloom'd the olive; where the clustering vine
With her broad foliage mantled every hill;
Where Ceres with exuberance enrob'd
The pregnant bosoms of the fields in gold;
Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd
The dazzling works of wealth, along the banks
Of copious rivers show'd their stately tow'rs,
The strength and splendour of the peopled land.
Then, in a moment clouds obscur'd my view;
At once all vanish'd from my waking eyes.'
' Thrice I salute the omen! (loud began
The sage Megistias:) ' In this mystic dream
I see my country's victories. The land,
The deep, shall own her triumphs: while the tears
Of Asia and of Libya shall deplore
Their offspring, cast before the vulture's beak,
And every monstrous native of the main.
These joyous fields of plenty picture Greece,
Enrich'd by conquest and Barbarian spoils.
He, whom thou saw'st, in regal vesture clad,

Print on the sand his solitary step,
Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive.' So spake
The reverend augur. Every bosom felt
Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond
All sense and all conception, but of those
Who die to save their country! Here again
The' exulting band Leonidas address'd—
'Since happiness from virtue is deriv'd,
Who for his country dies, that moment proves
Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.
But go, Megistias; instantly prepare
The sacred fuel, and the victim due,
That to the Muses (so by Sparta's law
We are enjoin'd) our offerings may be paid
Before we march. Remember, from the rites
Let every sound be absent; not the fife,
Not ev'n the music-breathing flute, be heard.
Meantime, ye leaders, every band instruct
To move in silence.'—Mindful of their charge,
The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
His various armour. Agis close attends,
His best assistant. First a breastplate arms
The spacious chest. O'er this the hero spreads
The mailed cuirass, from his shoulders hung.
A shining belt infolds his mighty loins.
Next, on his stately temples he erects
The plumed helm; then grasps his pondrous shield;
Where, nigh the centre, on projecting brass,
The' inimitable artist had emboss'd
The shape of great Alcides, whom to gain
Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here
Won, by soft wiles, the' attracted eye; and there
The form of Virtue dignified the scene.
In her majestic sweetness was display'd

The mind sublime and happy. From her lips
Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look serene,
But fix'd intensely on the son of Jove,
She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,
Her paths ascended. On the summit stood,
Supported by a trophy near to heav'n,
Fame, and protended her eternal trump.
The youth, attentive to her wisdom, own'd
The prevalence of Virtue; while his eye,
Fill'd by that spirit which redeem'd the world
From tyranny and monsters, darted flames,
Not undescried by Pleasure, where she lay
Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around
Were flowerets strewn, and wantonly in rills
A fount meander'd. All relax'd her limbs;
Nor wanting yet solicitude to gain,
What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair,
She seem'd collecting every power to charm:
Excess of sweet allurement she diffus'd
In vain. Still Virtue sway'd Alcides' mind.
Hence all his labours. Wrought with varied art,
The shield's external surface they enrich'd.
  This portraiture of glory on his arm
Leonidas displays, and, towering, strides
From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.
The chiefs assume their station. Torches blaze
Through every file. All now in silent pace
To join in solemn sacrifice proceed.
First Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,
The sacred salt and barley. At his side
Diomedon sustains a weighty mace.
The priest, Megistias, follows like the rest
In polish'd armour. White as winter's fleece,
A fillet round his shining helm reveals

The sacerdotal honours. By the horns,
Where laurels twine, with Alpheus, Maron leads
The consecrated ox: and lo! behind
Leonidas advances. Never he
In such transcendent majesty was seen;
And his own virtue never so enjoy'd.
Successive move Dieneces the brave;
In hoary state Demophilus; the bloom
Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope
Of future praise; the generous Agis next,
Serene and graceful; last, the Theban chiefs,
Repining, ignominious; then slow march
The troops, all mute, nor shake their brazen arms.
Not from Thermopylæ remote the hills
Of Œta, yielding to a fruitful dale,
Within their side, half circling, had enclos'd
A fair expanse in verdure smooth. The bounds
Were edg'd by wood, o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs,
Which from the clouds bent, frowning. Down a rock,
Above the loftiest summit of the grove,
A tumbling torrent wore the shagged stone;
Then, gleaming through the intervals of shade,
Attain'd the valley, where the level stream
Diffus'd refreshment. On its banks the Greeks
Had rais'd a rustic altar, fram'd of turf.
Broad was the surface, high in piles of wood,
All interspers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd
Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vase
Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd
Before the altar; and of wine unmix'd
Capacious goblets stood. Megistias now
His helm unloosen'd. With his snowy head
Uncover'd, round the solemn pile he trod.
He shook a branch of laurel, scattering wide

The sacred moisture of the main. His hand
Next on the altar, on the victim strew'd
The mingled salt and barley. O'er the horns
The' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape,
Discharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd
Diomedon. Megistias gave the sign.
Down sunk the victim by a deathful stroke,
Nor groan'd. The augur buried in the throat
His hallow'd steel. A purple current flow'd.
Now smok'd the structure, now it flam'd abroad
In sudden splendour. Deep in circling ranks
The Grecians press'd. Each held a sparkling brand;
The beaming lances intermix'd; the helms,
The burnish'd armour, multiplied the blaze.
Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile
His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,
The casque to Agis he consign'd; his shield,
His spear to Dithyrambus; then, his arms
Extending, forth in supplication broke—
'Harmonious daughters of Olympian Jove!
Who, on the top of Helicon ador'd,
And high Parnassus, with delighted ears
Bend to the warble of Castalia's stream,
Or Aganippe's murmur; if from thence
We must invoke your presence, or along
The neighbouring mountains with propitious steps
If now you grace your consecrated bowers,
Look down, ye Muses! nor disdain to stand
Each an immortal witness of our fate.
But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove
And you must honour. Let her sacred eyes
Approve her dying Grecians; let her voice
In exultation tell the earth and heavens,
These are her sons. Then strike your tuneful shells,

Record us guardians of our parents' age,
Our matrons' virtue, and our children's bloom,
The glorious bulwarks of our country's laws,
Who shall ennoble the historian's page,
Shall on the joyous festival inspire
With loftier strains the virgins' choral song.
Then, O celestial maids! on yonder camp
Let night sit heavy. Let a sleep like death
Weigh down the eye of Asia. O infuse
A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts,
Which may in silence guide our daring feet,
Controul our fury, nor by tumult wild
The friendly dark affright, till dying groans
Of slaughter'd tyrants into horror wake
The midnight calm; then turn destruction loose.
Let terror, let confusion, rage around;
In one vast ruin heap the barbarous ranks,
Their horse, their chariots. Let the spurning steed
Imbrue his hoofs in blood, the shatter'd cars
Crush with their brazen weight the prostrate necks
Of chiefs and kings, encircled, as they fall,
By nations slain. You, countrymen and friends!
My last commands retain. Your general's voice
Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,
Or minds resolv'd and dauntless to confirm.
Too well by this expiring blaze I see
Impatient valour flash from every eye.
O temper well that ardour, and your lips
Close on the rising transport. Mark how sleep
Hath folded millions in his black embrace.
No sound is wafted from the' unnumber'd foe.
The winds themselves are silent. All conspires
To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon
Shall only wake to die. Their crowded train

This night perhaps to Pluto's dreary shades
Ev'n Xerxes' ghost may lead, unless reserv'd
From this destruction to lament a doom
Of more disgrace, when Greece confounds that pow'r
Which we will shake. But look, the setting moon
Shuts on our darksome paths her waning horns.
Let each his head distinguish by a wreath
Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim share,
Then crown the goblet. Take your last repast;
With your forefathers and the heroes old
You next will banquet, in the bless'd abodes.'
Here ends their leader. Through the' encircling crowd
The agitation of their spears denotes
High ardour. So the spiry growth of pines
Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds
Among their stately trunks on Pelion's brow.
The Acarnanian-seer distributes swift
The sacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,
Around each helm the woven leaves unite
Their glossy verdure to the floating plumes.
Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl
Then flows the vine's empurpled stream. Aloof
The Theban train, in wan dejection mute,
Brood o'er their shame, or cast affrighted looks
On that determin'd courage which, unmov'd
At Fate's approach, with cheerful lips could taste
The sparkling goblet, could in joy partake
That last, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,
Dissembling fear no longer. Agis here,
Regardful ever of the king's command,
Accosts the Theban chiefs in whispers thus—

'Leonidas permits you to retire;
While on the rites of sacrifice employ'd,
None heed your motions. Separate, and fly
In silent pace.'—This heard, the' inglorious troop,
Their files dissolving, from the rest withdraw.
Unseen they moulder from the host, like snow,
Freed from the rigour of constraining frost;
Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,
The transitory landscape melts in rills
Away; and structures, which delude the eye,
Insensibly are lost. The solemn feast
Was now concluded. Now Laconia's king
Had reassum'd his arms. Before his step
The crowd roll backward. In their gladden'd sight
His crest, illumin'd by uplifted brands,
Its purple splendour shakes. The towering oak
Thus from a lofty promontory waves
His majesty of verdure. As with joy
The sailors mark his heaven-ascending pride,
Which from afar directs their foamy course
Along the pathless ocean; so the Greeks
In transport gaze, as down their opening ranks
The king proceeds; from whose superior frame
A soul like thine, O Phidias! might conceive,
In Parian marble or effulgent brass,
The form of great Apollo; when the god,
Won by the prayers of man's afflicted race,
In arms forsook his lucid throne, to pierce
The monster Python in the Delphian vale.
Close by the hero Polydorus waits,
To guide destruction through the Asian tents.
As the young eagle near his parent's side
In wanton flight essays his vigorous wing,

Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds,
To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,
And die his beak in gore; by Sparta's king
The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares
His arm for death. He feasts his angry soul
On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts
Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat
Of his long sorrows, not with fetter'd hands,
But now once more a Spartan, with his spear,
His shield, restor'd, to lead his country's bands,
And with them devastation. Nor the rest
Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend
Their various plumes, as intermingling oaks
Combine their foliage in Dodona's grove;
Or as the cedars on the Syrian hills
Their shady texture spread. Once more the king,
O'er all the phalanx his considerate view
Extending, through the ruddy gleam descries
One face of gladness; but the godlike van
He most contemplates: Agis, Alpheus there,
Megistias, Maron, with Platæa's chief,
Dieneces, Demophilus, are seen
With Thespia's youth: nor they their steady sight
From his remove, in speechless transport bound
By love, by veneration, till they hear
His last injunction. To their different posts
They separate. Instant on the dewy turf
Are cast the' extinguish'd brands. On all around
Drops sudden darkness; on the wood, the hill,
The snowy ridge, the vale, the silver stream.
It verg'd on midnight. Tow'rd the hostile camp,
In march compos'd and silent, down the pass
The phalanx mov'd. Each patient bosom hush'd

Its struggling spirit, nor in whispers breath'd
The rapturous ardour virtue then inspir'd.
So lowering clouds along the' ethereal void,
In slow expansion, from the gloomy north
Awhile suspend their horrors, destin'd soon
To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas and the Grecians penetrate through the Persian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids destruction by flight. The Barbarians are slaughtered in great multitudes, and their camp is set on fire. Leonidas conducts his men in good order back to Thermopylæ; engages the Persians who were descended from the hills; and, after numberless proofs of superior strength and valour, sinks down covered with wounds, and expires the last of all the Grecian commanders.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XII.

Across the' unguarded bound of Asia's camp
Slow pass the Grecians. Through innumerous tents,
Where all is mute and tranquil, they pursue
Their march sedate. Beneath the leaden hand
Of Sleep lie millions motionless and deaf,
Nor dream of Fate's approach. Their wary foes,
By Polydorus guided, still proceed.
Ev'n to the centre of the' extensive host
They pierce unseen; when lo! the' imperial tent
Yet distant rose before them. Spreading round
The' august pavilion, was an ample space
For thousands in arrangement. Here a band
Of chosen Persians, watchful o'er the king,
Held their nocturnal station. As the hearts
Of anxious nations, whom the' unsparing sword
Or famine threaten, tremble at the sight
Of fear-engender'd phantoms in the sky,
Aërial hosts amid the clouds array'd,
Portending woe and death; the Persian guard
In equal consternation now descried
The glimpse of hostile armour. All disband,
As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks
Pan held their banner, scattering from its folds
Fear and confusion, which to Xerxes' couch,

Swift-winged, fly; thence shake the general camp,
Whose numbers issue naked, pale, unarm'd,
Wild in amazement, blinded by dismay,
To every foe obnoxious. In the breasts
Of thousands, gor'd at once, the Grecian steel
Reeks in destruction. Deluges of blood
Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps
Of wretches slain, unconscious of the hand
Which wastes their helpless multitude. Amaze,
Affright, distraction, from his pillow chase
The lord of Asia, who in thought beholds
United Greece in arms. Thy lust of pow'r!
Thy hope of glory! whither are they flown,
With all thy pomp? In this disastrous hour
What could avail the' immeasurable range
Of thy proud camp, save only to conceal
Thy trembling steps, O Xerxes! while thou fly'st?
To thy deserted couch, with other looks,
With other steps, Leonidas is nigh.
Before him Terror strides. Gigantic Death
And Desolation at his side attend.

The vast pavilion's empty space, where lamps
Of gold shed light and odours, now admits
The hero. Ardent throngs behind him press,
But miss their victim. To the ground are hurl'd
The glittering ensigns of imperial state.
The diadem, the sceptre, late ador'd
Through boundless kingdoms, underneath their feet,
In mingled rage and scorn, the warriors crush,
A sacrifice to freedom! They return
Again to form. Leonidas exalts
For new destruction his resistless spear;
When double darkness suddenly descends.
The clouds, condensing, intercept the stars.

Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging east
In whirlwinds sweeps the surge. The coasts re-
sound.
The cavern'd rocks, the crashing forests, roar.
Swift through the camp the hurricane impels
Its rude career; when Asia's numbers, veil'd
Amid the sheltering horrors of the storm,
Evade the victor's lance. The Grecains halt;
While to their general's pregnant mind occurs
A new attempt and vast. Perpetual fire
Beside the tent of Xerxes, from the hour
He lodg'd his standards on the Malian plains,
Had shone. Among his Magi, to adore
Great Horomazes was the monarch wont
Before the sacred light. Huge piles of wood
Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the constant flame.
On living embers these are cast. So wills
Leonidas. The phalanx then divides.
Four troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,
By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The last
Himself conducts. The word is given. They seize
The burning fuel. Sparkling in the wind,
Destructive fire is brandish'd. All, enjoin'd
To reassemble at the regal tent,
By various paths the hostile camp invade.
Now devastation, unconfin'd, involves
The Malian fields. Amoug Barbarian tents,
From different stations, fly consuming flames.
The Greeks afford no respite; and the storm
Exasperates the blaze. To every part
The conflagration like a sea expands,
One waving surface of unbounded fire.
In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames

To heaven's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.
So, when the north emits his purpled lights,
The undulated radiance, streaming wide,
As with a burning canopy, invests
The' ethereal concave. Œta now disclos'd
His forehead, glittering in eternal frost,
While down his rocks the foamy torrents shone.
Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown;
Night snatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breast;
The billows glimmer'd from the distant shores.
But lo! a pillar huge of smoke ascends,
Which overshades the field. There horror, there
Leonidas, presides. Command he gave
To Polydorus, who, exulting, show'd
Where Asia's horse and warlike cars possess'd
A crowded station. At the hero's nod
Devouring Vulcan riots on the stores
Of Ceres, emptied of the ripen'd grain,
On all the tribute from her meadows brown,
By rich Thessalia render'd to the scythe.
A flood of fire envelops all the ground.
The cordage bursts around the blazing tents.
Down sink the roofs on suffocated throngs,
Close-wedg'd by fear. The Libyan chariot burns.
The' Arabian camel and the Persian steed
Bound through a burning deluge. Wild with pain,
They shake their singed manes. Their madding hoofs
Dash through the blood of thousands, mix'd with flames,
Which rage, augmented by the whirlwind's blast.
Meantime, the sceptred lord of half the globe

From tent to tent precipitates his flight.
Dispers'd are all his satraps. Pride herself
Shuns his dejected brow. Despair alone
Waits on the' imperial fugitive, and shows,
As round the camp his eye, distracted, roves,
No limits to destruction. Now is seen
Aurora, mounting from her eastern hill
In rosy sandals, and with dewy locks.
The winds subside before her; darkness flies;
A stream of light proclaims the cheerful day,
Which sees at Xerxes' tent the conquering bands,
All reunited. What could fortune more
To aid the valiant, what to gorge revenge?
Lo! desolation o'er the adverse host
Hath emptied all her terrors. Ev'n the hand
Of languid slaughter dropt the crimson steel;
Nor Nature longer can sustain the toil
Of unremitted conquest. Yet what power
Among these sons of Liberty reviv'd
Their drooping warmth, new-strung their nerves, recall'd
Their wearied swords to deeds of brighter fame?
What, but the' inspiring hope of glorious death
To crown their labours, and the' auspicious look
Of their heroic chief, which, still unchang'd,
Still in superior majesty, declar'd
No toil had yet relax'd his matchless strength,
Nor worn the vigour of his godlike soul.
Back to the pass, in gentle march, he leads
The' embattled warriors. They behind the shrubs,
Where Medon sent such numbers to the shades,
In ambush lie. The tempest is o'erblown.
Soft breezes only from the Malian wave
O'er each grim face, besmear'd with smoke and gore,

Their cool refreshment breathe. The healing gale,
A crystal rill near Œta's verdant feet,
Dispel the languor from their harass'd nerves,
Fresh brac'd by strength returning. O'er their heads
Lo! in full blaze of majesty appears
Melissa, bearing in her hand divine
The' eternal guardian of illustrious deeds,
The sweet Phœbean lyre. Her graceful train
Of white-rob'd virgins, seated on a range
Half down the cliff, o'ershadowing the Greeks,
All with concordant strings and accents clear,
A torrent pour of melody, and swell
A high, triumphal, solemn, dirge of praise,
Anticipating fame. Of endless joys
In bless'd Elysium was the song—'Go, meet
Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus sage,
Let them salute the children of their laws:
Meet Homer, Orpheus, and the' Ascræan bard,
Who, with a spirit by ambrosial food
Refin'd and more exalted, shall contend
Your splendid fate to warble through the bowers
Of amaranth and myrtle, ever young,
Like your renown. Your ashes we will cull.
In yonder fane deposited, your urns,
Dear to the Muses, shall our lays inspire.
Whatever offerings genius, science, art,
Can dedicate to virtue, shall be yours,
The gifts of all the Muses, to transmit
You on the' enliven'd canvass, marble, brass,
In wisdom's volume, in the poet's song,
In every tongue, through every age and clime;
You of this earth the brightest flowers, not cropt,
Transplanted only to immortal bloom
Of praise with men, of happiness with gods.'

The Grecian valour on religion's flame
To ecstasy is wafted. Death is nigh.
As by the Graces fashion'd, he appears
A beauteous form. His adamantine gate
Is half unfolded. All in transport catch
A glimpse of Immortality. Elate
In rapturous delusion, they believe
That to behold and solemnize their fate
The goddesses are present on the hills
With celebrating lyres. In thought serene,
Leonidas the kind deception bless'd,
Nor undeceiv'd his soldiers. After all
The' incessant labours of the horrid night,
Through blood, through flames, continued; he prepares
In order'd battle to confront the powers
Of Hyperanthes from the upper straits.
Not long the Greeks in expectation wait
Impatient. Sudden, with tumultuous shouts,
Like Nile's rude current, where, in deafening roar,
Prone from the steep of Elephantis, falls
A sea of waters, Hyperanthes pours
His chosen numbers on the Grecian camp
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van
They march conductors. On the Persians roll,
In martial thunder, through the sounding pass.
They issue forth, impetuous, from its mouth.
That moment Sparta's leader gave the sign;
When, as the' impulsive ram in forceful sway
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its base,
And strews a town with ruin, so the band
Of serried heroes down the Malian steep,
Tremendous depth! the mix'd battalions sweep

Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd.
Abrupt and naked, all was rock beneath.
Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength
Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag;
Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word
His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass.
Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.
Ev'n Hyperanthes shrinks in wonder back.
Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.
The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king
Still presses forward, till an open breadth
Of fifty paces yields his front extent
To proffer battle. Hyperanthes soon
Recals his warriors, dissipates their fears.
Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud
Of darts is shower'd. The' encountering armies close.

Who first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm?
What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name, in curses sounded from the lips
Of noble mothers, wailing for their sons?
What towns with empty monuments were filled
For those whom thy unconquerable sword
This day to vultures cast? First Bessus died,
A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves,
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees
Among the branches interwove their sweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
In rich profusion o'er the goblet foam'd.
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd;
He long, assiduous, unavailing, woo'd
The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd
A lover's soft complaint. Her rigid ear

Was fram'd to watch the tempest while it rag'd,
Her eye accustom'd on the rolling deck
To brave the turgid billow. Near the shore
She now is present in her pinnace light,
The spectacle of glory crowds her breast
With different passions. Valiant, she applauds
The Grecian valour; faithful, she laments
Her sad presage of Persia; prompts her son
To emulation of the Greeks in arms,
And of herself in loyalty. By fate
Is she reserv'd to signalize that day
Of future shame, when Xerxes must behold
The blood of nations overflow his decks,
And to their bottom tinge the briny floods
Of Salamis; whence she with Asia flies,
She only not inglorious. Low reclines
Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat
Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves
His fruitless sorrows. Next Maduces fell,
A Paphlagonian: born amid the sound
Of chafing surges, and the roar of winds,
He o'er the' inhospitable Euxine foam
Was wont, from high Carambis' rock, to ken
Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic stream;
Then, with his dire associates, through the deep
For spoil and slaughter guide his savage prow.
Him dogs will rend ashore. From Medus far,
Their native current, two bold brothers died,
Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords
Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,
Cilician prince, Lilæus, who had left
The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields,
With Babylonian Tenagon, expir'd.
The growing carnage Hyperanthes views

Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides
Against the victor. Each his lance protends.
But Asia's numbers interpose their shields,
Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd:
Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,
His term protracting for augmented fame.
So two proud vessels, labouring on the foam,
Present for battle their destructive beaks;
When ridgy seas, by hurricanes uptorn,
In mountainous commotion dash between,
And either deck, in blackening tempest veil'd,
Waft from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd
Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay
Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart
Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds
Of day were climbing their meridian height.
Continued shouts of onset from the pass
Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard.
When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd
His distant quarter, starting from repose,
He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd,
To aid his regal master. Asia's camp
He found the seat of terror and despair.

As in some fruitful clime, which late hath known
The rage of winds and floods, although the storm
Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,
Still o'er the wasted region Nature mourns
In melancholy silence; through the grove
With prostrate glories lie the stately oak,
The' uprooted elm and beach; the plain is spread
With fragments, swept from villages o'erthrown;
Around the pastures, flocks and herds are cast
In dreary piles of death: so Persia's host,
In terror mute, one boundless scene displays

Of devastation. Half-devour'd by fire,
Her tall pavilions and her martial cars
Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore
Her princes welter, nameless thousands there,
Not victims all to Greeks. In gasping heaps
Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, show'd
The wild confusion of that direful night,
When, wanting signals and a leader's care,
They rush'd on mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent
On its exalted summit, when the dawn
First streak'd the orient sky, was wont to bear
The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
Two lucid crystals. This the general host
Observ'd, their awful signal to arrange
In arms complete, and numberless to watch
Their monarch's rising. This conspicuous blaze
Artuchus places in the' accustom'd seat.
As, after winds have ruffled by a storm
The plumes of darkness, when her welcome face
The morning lifts serene, each wary swain
Collects his flock dispers'd; the neighing steed,
The herds forsake their shelter; all return
To well-known pastures, and frequented streams:
So now this cheering signal on the tent
Revives each leader. From inglorious flight
Their scatter'd bands they call, their wonted ground
Resume, and hail Artuchus. From their swarms
A force he culls. Thermopylæ he seeks.
Fell shouts in horrid dissonance precede.
His phalanx swift Leonidas commands
To circle backward from the Malian bay.
Their order changes. Now, half orb'd, they stand
By Œta's fence protected from behind,
With either flank united to the rock.

As by the' excelling architect dispos'd
To shield some haven, a stupendous mole,
Fram'd of the grove and quarry's mingled strength,
In ocean's bosom penetrates afar:
There, pride of art! immoveable it looks
On Eolus and Neptune; there defies
Those potent gods combin'd: unyielding thus,
The Grecians stood a solid mass of war
Against Artuchus, join'd with numbers new
To Hyperánthes. In the foremost rank
Leonidas his dreadful station held.
Around him soon a spacious void was seen,
By flight or slaughter in the Persian van.
In generous shame and wrath Artuchus burns,
Discharging full at Lacedæmon's chief
An iron-studded mace. It glanc'd aside,
Turn'd by the massy buckler. Prone to earth
The satrap fell. Alcander aim'd his point,
Which had transfix'd him prostrate on the rock,
But for the' immediate succour he obtain'd
From faithful soldiers, lifting on their shields
A chief belov'd. Not such Alcander's lot.
An arrrow wounds his heart. Supine he lies,
The only Theban who to Greece preserv'd
Unviolated faith. Physician sage,
On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull
Was he accustom'd, to expatiate o'er
The Heliconian pastures, where no plants
Of poison spring, of juice salubrious all,
Which vipers, winding in their verdant track,
Drink, and expel the venom from their tooth,
Dipt in the sweetness of that soil divine.
On him the brave Artontes sinks in death,
Renown'd through wide Bithynia, ne'er again

The clamorous rites of Cybelé to share;
While echo murmurs through the hollow caves
Of Berecynthian Dindymus. The strength
Of Alpheus sent him to the shades of night.
Ere from the dead was disengag'd the spear,
Huge Abradates, glorying in his might,
Surpassing all of Cissian race, advanc'd
To grapple; planting firm his foremost step,
The victor's throat he grasp'd. At Nemea's games
The wrestler's chaplet Alpheus had obtain'd.
He summons all his art. Oblique the stroke
Of his swift foot supplants the Persian's heel.
He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags
His foe upon him. In the Spartan's back
Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging spears.
To Abradates' chest the weapons pass;
They rivet both in death. This Maron sees,
This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, strewn
Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corse.
At length the generous blood of Maron warms
The sword of Hyperanthes. On the spear
Of Polydorus falls the pondrous ax
Of Sacian Mardus. From the yielding wood
The steely point is sever'd. Undismay'd,
The Spartan stoops to rear the knotted mace
Left by Artuchus; but thy fatal blade,
Abrocomes, that dreadful instant watch'd
To rend his opening side. Unconquer'd still,
Swift he discharges on the Sacian's front
A ponderous blow, which burst the scatter'd brain.
Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows
Of vital crimson. Smiling, he reflects
On sorrow finish'd, on his Spartan name,
Renew'd in lustre. Sudden to his side

Springs Dithyrambus. Through the' uplifted arm
Of Mindus, pointing a malignant dart
Against the dying Spartan, he impell'd
His spear. The point, with violence unspent,
Urg'd by such vigour, reach'd the Persian's throat
Above his corselet. Polydorus stretch'd
His languid hand to Thespia's friendly youth,
Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace;
While Mindus, wasted by his streaming wound,
Beside him faints and dies. In flowering prime
He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn,
His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey.
She tow'rd the Euxine sends her plaintive sighs;
She wooes in tender piety the winds:
Vain is their favour; they can never breathe
On his returning sail. At once a crowd
Of eager Persians seize the victor's spear.
One of his nervous hands retains it fast,
The other bares his falchion. Wounds and death
He scatters round. Sosarmes feels his arm
Lopt from the shoulder. Zatis leaves entwin'd
His fingers round the long-disputed lance.
On Mardon's reins descends the ponderous blade,
Which half divides his body. Pheron strides
Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes
The wearied Thespian, who resigns his hold,
But cleaves the' elate Barbarian to the brain.
Abrocomes darts forward, shakes his steel,
Whose lightning threatens death. The wary Greek
Wards with his sword the well-directed stroke,
Then, closing, throws the Persian. Now what aid
Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n,
Preserves the eastern hero? Lo! the friend
Of Teribazus. Eager to avenge

That lov'd, that lost companion, and defend
A brother's life; beneath the sinewy arm
Outstretch'd, the sword of Hyperanthes pass'd
Through Dithyrambus. All the strings of life
At once relax; nor fame, nor Greece, demand
More from his valour. Prostrate now he lies
In glories, ripen'd on his blooming head.
Him shall the Thespian maidens in their songs
Record, once loveliest of the youthful train,
The gentle, wise, beneficent, and brave,
Grace of his lineage, and his country's boast,
Now fall'n. Elysium to his parting soul
Uncloses. So the cedar, which supreme
Among the groves of Libanus hath tower'd,
Uprooted, lowers his graceful top, preferr'd,
For dignity of growth, some royal dome
Or heaven-devoted fabric to adorn.
Diomedon bursts forward. Round his friend
He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts
Attend thy shade, fall'n hero! Long prevail'd
His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'd;
Till four Assyrians on his shelving spear,
Ere from a Cissian's prostrate body freed,
Their ponderous maces all discharge. It broke.
Still with a shatter'd truncheon he maintains
Unequal fight. Impetuous, through his eye
The well-aim'd fragment penetrates the brain
Of one bold warrior; there the splinter'd wood,
Infix'd, remains. The hero last unsheaths
His falchion broad. A second sees aghast
His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,
The head, steel-cas'd, descends. In blood is roll'd
The grizzly beard. That effort breaks the blade
Short from its hilt. The Grecian stands disarm'd.

The fourth, Astaspes, proud Chaldæan lord,
Is nigh. He lifts his iron-plated mace.
This, while a cluster of auxiliar friends
Hang on the Grecian shield, to earth depress'd,
Loads with unerring blows the batter'd helm;
Till on the ground Diomedon extends
His mighty limbs. So weaken'd by the force
Of some tremendous engine, which the hand
Of Mars impels, a citadel, high-tower'd,
Whence darts, and fire, and ruins, long have aw'd,
Begirding legions, yields at last, and spreads
Its disuniting ramparts on the ground;
Joy fills the' assailants, and the battle's tide
Whelms o'er the widening breach. The Persian thus
O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
Against the Grecian remnant; when behold
Leonidas! At once their ardour froze.
He had awhile behind his friends retir'd,
Oppress'd by labour. Pointless was his spear,
His buckler cleft. As, overworn by storms,
A vessel steers to some protecting bay;
Then, soon as timely gales inviting curl
The azure floods, to Neptune shows again
Her masts, apparell'd fresh in shrouds and sails,
Which court the vigorous wind; so Sparta's king,
In strength repair'd, a spear and buckler new
Presents to Asia. From her bleeding ranks
Hydarnes, urg'd by destiny, approach'd.
He, proudly vaunting, left an infant race,
A spouse, lamenting on the distant verge
Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain
He, parting, promis'd. Wanton hope will sport
Round his cold heart no longer. Grecian spoils,
Imagin'd triumphs, pictur'd on his mind,

Fate will erase for ever. Through the targe,
The thick-mail'd corselet, his divided chest
Of bony strength admits the hostile spear.
Leonidas draws back the steely point,
Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow.
Meantime within his buckler's rim, unseen,
Amphistreus stealing, in the' unguarded flank,
His dagger struck. In slow effusion ooz'd
The blood, from Hercules deriv'd; but death
Not yet had reach'd his mark. The' indignant king
Gripes irresistibly the Persian's throat.
He drags him prostrate. False, corrupt, and base,
Fallacious, fell, pre-eminent was he
Among tyrannic satraps. Phrygia pin'd
Beneath the' oppression of his ruthless sway.
Her soil had once been fruitful; once her towns
Were populous and rich. The direful change,
To naked fields and crumbling roofs, declar'd
The' accurs'd Amphistreus govern'd. As the spear
Of Tyrian Cadmus rivetted to earth
The poisonous dragon, whose infectious breath
Had blasted all Bœotia; so the king,
On prone Amphistreus trampling, to the rock
Nails down the tyrant, and the fractur'd staff
Leaves in his panting body. But the blood,
Great hero, dropping from thy wound, revives
The hopes of Persia. Thy unyielding arm
Upholds the conflict still. Against thy shield
The various weapons shiver, and thy feet
With glittering points surround. The Lydian sword,
The Persian dagger, leave their shatter'd hilts;
Bent is the Caspian scimitar; the lance,
The javelin, dart and arrow, all combine
Their fruitless efforts. From Alcides sprung,

Thou stand'st unshaken, like a Thracian hill,
Like Rhodope, or Hæmus; where in vain
The thunderer plants his livid bolt; in vain
Keen-pointed lightnings pierce the' encrusted snow;
And winter, beating with eternal war,
Shakes from his dreary wings discordant storms,
Chill sleet, and clattering hail. Advancing bold,
His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain
Aims at the forehead of Laconia's chief.
He, not unguarded, rears his active blade
Athwart the dangerous blow, whose fury wastes
Above his crest in air. Then, swiftly wheel'd,
The ponderous weapon cleaves the Persian's knee
Sheer through the parted bone. He sidelong falls,
Crush'd on the ground beneath contending feet,
Great Xerxes' brother yields the last remains
Of tortur'd life. Leonidas persists;
Till Agis calls Dieneces, alarms
Demophilus, Megistias: they o'er piles
Of Allarodian and Sasperian dead
Haste to their leader; they before him raise
The brazen bulwark of their massy shields.
The foremost rank of Asia stands and bleeds,
The rest recoil: but Hyperanthes swift
From band to band his various host pervades,
Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave
New fortitude excites, the frigid heart
Of fear he warms. Astaspes first obeys,
Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn,
Proud of his wealthy stores, his stately domes,
More proud in recent victory: his might
Had foil'd Platæa's chief. Before the front
He strides impetuous. His triumphant mace
Against the brave Dieneces he bends.

The weighty blow bears down the' opposing shield,
And breaks the Spartan's shoulder. Idle hangs
The weak defence, and loads the' inactive arm,
Depriv'd of every function. Agis bares
His vengeful blade. At two well-levell'd strokes
Of both his hands, high brandishing the mace,
He mutilates the foe. A Sacian chief
Springs on the victor. Jaxartes' banks
To this brave savage gave his name and birth.
His look erect, his bold deportment, spoke
A gallant spirit, but untam'd by laws,
With dreary wilds familiar, and a race
Of rude Barbarians, horrid as their clime.
From its direction glanc'd the Spartan spear,
Which, upward borne, o'erturn'd his iron cone.
Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks;
They aggravate his fury; while his foe
Repeats the stroke, and penetrates his chest.
The' intrepid Sacian through his breast and back
Receives the grinding steel. Along the staff
He writhes his tortur'd body; in his grasp
A barbed arrow from his quiver shakes;
Deep in the streaming throat of Agis hides
The deadly point; then grimly smiles and dies.
From him Fate hastens to a nobler prey,
Dieneces. His undefended frame
The shield abandons, sliding from his arm.
His breast is gor'd by javelins. On the foe
He hurls them back, extracted from his wounds.
Life, yielding slow to destiny, at length
Forsakes his riven heart; nor less in death
Thermopylæ he graces than before
By martial deeds and conduct. What can stem
The barbarous torrent? Agis bleeds. His spear

Lies useless, irrecoverably plung'd
In Jaxartes's body. Low reclines
Dieneces. Leonidas himself,
O'erlabour'd, wounded, with his dinted sword
The rage of war can exercise no more.
One last, one glorious effort age performs.
Demophilus, Megistias, join their might.
They check the tide of conquest; while the spear
Of slain Dieneces to Sparta's chief
The fainting Agis bears. The pointed ash,
In that dire hand for battle rear'd anew,
Blasts every Persian's valour. Back in heaps
They roll, confounded; by their general's voice
In vain exhorted longer to endure
The ceaseless waste of that unconquer'd arm.
So, when the giants from Olympus chas'd
The' inferior gods, themselves in terror shun'd
The' incessant streams of lightning, where the hand
Of heaven's great father with eternal might
Sustain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field
Awhile Bellona gives the battle rest;
When Thespia's leader and Megistias drop
At either side of Lacedæmon's king.
Beneath the weight of years and labour bend
The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests
Their parting spirits; but in death's calm night
All-silent sinks each venerable head.
Like aged oaks, whose deep-descending roots
Had pierc'd resistless through a craggy slope;
There, during three long centuries, have brav'd
Malignant Eurus, and the boisterous north;
Till, bare and sapless by corroding time,
Without a blast, their mossy trunks recline
Before their parent hill. Not one remains,

But Agis, near Leonidas, whose hand
The last kind office to his friend performs,
Extracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,
Pours forth in crimson floods. O Agis! pale
Thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs;
They lose their graces. Dim'd, thy eyes reveal
The native goodness of thy heart no more.
Yet other graces spring. The noble corse
Leonidas surveys. A pause he finds,
To mark how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
And see those honours on the breast he lov'd.
But Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks
Of Asia's towers, inflexibly resolv'd
The Persian glory to redeem, or fall.
The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm
Uplifts once more. He waits the dauntless prince.
The heroes now stand adverse. Each awhile
Restrains his valour. Each, admiring, views
His godlike foe. At length their brandish'd points
Provoke the contest, fated soon to close
The long-continued horrors of the day.
Fix'd in amaze and fear, the Asian throng,
Unmov'd and silent, on their bucklers pause.
Thus on the wastes of India, while the earth
Beneath him groans, the elephant is seen,
His huge proboscis writhing, to defy
The strong rhinoceros, whose ponderous horn
Is newly whetted on a rock: anon
Each hideous bulk encounters: Earth her groan
Redoubles: trembling, from their covert gaze
The savage inmates of surrounding woods
In distant terror. By the varied art
Of either Chief the dubious combat long
Its great event retarded. Now his lance

Far through the hostile shield Laconia's king
Impell'd. Aside the Persian swung his arm:
Beneath it pass'd the weapon, which his targe
Encumber'd. Hopes of conquest and renown
Elate his courage. Sudden he directs
His rapid javelin to the Spartan's throat:
But he his wary buckler upward rais'd,
Which o'er his shoulder turn'd the glancing steel;
For one last effort then his scatter'd strength
Collecting, levell'd with resistless force
The massive orb, and dash'd its brazen verge
Full on the Persian's forehead. Down he sunk,
Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd
Beneath a marble fragment, from its seat
Heav'd by a whirlwind, sweeping o'er the ridge
Of some aspiring mansion. Generous prince!
What could his valour more? His single might
He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
Before his native bands. The Spartan king
Now stands alone. In heaps his slaughter'd friends,
All stretch'd around him lie. The distant foes
Shower on his head innumerable darts.
From various sluices gush the vital floods;
They stain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain
His brow is clouded; but those beauteous wounds,
The sacred pledges of his own renown,
And Sparta's safety, in serenest joy
His closing eye contemplates. Fame can twine
No brighter laurels round his glorious head;
His virtue more to labour fate forbids,
And lays him now in honourable rest,
To seal his country's liberty by death.

MISCELLANIES.

MISCELLANIES.

ON SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

To Newton's genius and immortal fame,
The' adventrous Muse with trembling pinions soars.
Thou heavenly Truth! from thy seraphic throne
Look favourable down, do thou assist
My labouring thought, do thou inspire my song.
Newton, who first the' Almighty's works display'd,
And smooth'd that mirror, in whose polish'd face
The great Creator now conspicuous shines;
Who open'd Nature's adamantine gates,
And to our minds her secret powers expos'd;
Newton demands the Muse: his sacred hand
Shall guide her infant steps; his sacred hand
Shall raise her to the Heliconian height,
Where, on its lofty top enthron'd, her head
Shall mingle with the stars. Hail Nature, hail!
O goddess, handmaid of the' ethereal power,
Now lift thy head, and to the' admiring world
Show thy long hidden beauty. Thee the wise
Of ancient fame, immortal Plato's self,
The Stagyrite, and Syracusian sage,
From black obscurity's abyss to raise,
(Drooping and mourning o'er thy wondrous works)
With vain inquiry sought. Like meteors these
In their dark age bright sons of wisdom shone;

But at thy Newton all their laurels fade,
They shrink from all the honours of their names.
So glimmering stars contract their feeble rays,
When the swift lustre of Aurora's face
Flows o'er the skies, and wraps the heavens in light.
  The Deity's omnipotence, the cause,
The' original of things, long lay unknown.
Alone the beauties prominent to sight
(Of the celestial power the outward form)
Drew praise and wonder from the gazing world.
As when the deluge overspread the earth,
Whilst yet the mountains only rear'd their heads
Above the surface of the wild expanse,
Whelm'd deep below the great foundations lay,
Till some kind angel at Heaven's high command
Roll'd back the rising tides, and haughty floods,
And to the ocean thunder'd out his voice:
Quick all the swelling and imperious waves,
The foaming billows and obscuring surge,
Back to their channels and their ancient seats
Recoil affrighted: from the darksome main
Earth raises smiling, as new-born, her head,
And with fresh charms her lovely face arrays.
So his extensive thought accomplish'd first
The mighty task to drive the' obstructing mists
Of ignorance away, beneath whose gloom
The' unshrouded majesty of Nature lay.
He drew the veil and swell'd the spreading scene.
  How had the moon around the' ethereal void
Rang'd, and eluded labouring mortals care,
Till his invention trac'd her secret steps;
While she, inconstant, with unsteady rein
Through endless mazes and meanders guides
In its unequal course her changing car:

Whether behind the Sun's superior light
She hides the beauties of her radiant face,
Or, when conspicuous, smiles upon mankind,
Unveiling all her night-rejoicing charms.
When thus the silver-tressed moon dispels
The frowning horrors from the brow of Night,
And with her splendours cheers the sullen gloom,
While sable-mantled Darkness with his veil
The visage of the fair horizon shades,
And over Nature spreads his raven wings;
Let me upon some unfrequented green
While sleep sits heavy on the drowsy world,
Seek out some solitary peaceful cell,
Where darksome woods around their gloomy brows
Bow low, and every hill's portended shade
Obscures the dusky vale, there silent dwell,
Where contemplation holds its still abode,
There trace the wide and pathless void of Heav'n,
And count the stars that sparkle on its robe;
Or else, in fancy's wildering mazes lost,
Upon the verdure see the fairy-elves
Dance o'er their magic circles; or behold,
In thought enraptur'd with the ancient bards,
Medea's baleful incantations draw
Down from her orb the paly Queen of night.
But chiefly, Newton, let me soar with thee;
And, while surveying all yon starry vault
With admiration I attentive gaze,
Thou shalt descend from thy celestial seat,
And waft aloft my high-aspiring mind;
Shalt show me there how Nature has ordain'd
Her fundamental laws, shalt lead my thought
Through all the wanderings of the' uncertain Moon,
And teach me all her operating powers.

She and the Sun with influence conjoint
Wield the huge axle of the whirling earth,
And from their just direction turn the poles,
Slow urging on the progress of the years.
The constellations seem to leave their seats,
And o'er the skies with solemn pace to move.
You, splendid rulers of the day and night,
The seas obey; at your resistless sway
Now they contract their waters, and expose
The dreary desert of old ocean's reign:
The craggy rocks their horrid sides disclose;
Trembling the sailor views the dreadful scene,
And cautiously the threatening ruin shuns.
But where the shallow waters hide the sands,
There ravenous destruction lurks conceal'd,
There the ill-guided vessel falls a prey,
And all her numbers gorge his greedy jaws.
But quick returning see the' impetuous tides
Back to the' abandon'd shores impel the main.
Again the foaming seas extend their waves.
Again the rolling floods embrace the shores,
And veil the horrors of the empty deep.
Thus the obsequious seas your power confess,
While from the surface healthful vapours rise,
Plenteous throughout the atmosphere diffus'd;
Or to supply the mountain's heads with springs,
Or fill the hanging clouds with needful rains,
That friendly streams, and kind refreshing showers,
May gently lave the sun-burnt thirsty plains;
Or to replenish all the empty air
With wholesome moisture, to increase the fruits
Of earth, and bless the labours of mankind,
O Newton! whither flies thy mighty soul,
How shall the feeble Muse pursue through all

The vast extent of thy unbounded thought,
That even seeks the' unseen recesses dark
To penetrate of Providence immense?
And thou, the great Dispenser of the world!
Propitious, who with inspiration taught'st
Our greatest bard to send thy praises forth;
Thou, who gav'st Newton thought; who smil'dst serene,
When to its bounds he stretch'd his swelling soul;
Who still benignant ever blest his toil,
And deign'd to his enlighten'd mind to' appear
Confess'd around the' interminated world:
To me, O thy divine infusion grant,
(O thou in all so infinitely good!)
That I may sing thy everlasting works,
Thy unexhausted store of Providence,
In thought effulgent and resounding verse:
O could I spread the wonderous theme around,
Where the wind cools the oriental world,
To the calm breezes of the zephyr's breath,
To where the frozen hyperborean blasts,
To where the' boist'rous tempest-leading south
From their deep hollow caves send forth their storms.
Thou still indulgent Parent of mankind!
Lest humid emanations should no more
Flow from the ocean, but dissolve away
Through the long series of revolving time;
And lest the vital principle decay,
By which the air supplies the springs of life;
Thou hast the fiery-visag'd comets form'd
With vivifying spirits all replete,
Which they abundant breathe about the void,
Renewing the prolific soul of things.
No longer now on thee amaz'd we call,

No longer tremble at imagin'd ills,
When comets blaze tremendous from on high,
Or when extending wide their flaming trains
With hideous grasp the skies engirdle round,
And spread the terrors of their burning locks.
For these, through orbits in the lengthening space
Of many tedious rolling years complete,
Around the sun move regularly on;
And with the planets in harmonious orbs,
And mystic periods, their obeisance pay
To him, majestic Ruler of the skies!
Upon his throne of circled glory fixt.
He, or some god conspicuous to the view,
Or else the substitute of nature seems,
Guiding the courses of revolving worlds.
He taught great Newton the all-potent laws
Of gravitation, by whose simple power
The universe exists. Nor here the sage,
Big with invention, still-renewing staid.
But, O bright angel of the lamp of day!
How shall the muse display his greatest toil?
Let her plunge deep in Aganippe's waves,
Or in Castalia's ever-flowing stream,
That reinspired she may sing to thee,
How Newton dar'd adventurous to unbraid
The yellow tresses of thy shining hair.
Or did'st thou gracious leave thy radiant sphere,
And to his hand thy lucid splendours give,
To' unweave the light-diffusing wreath, and part
The blended glories of thy golden plumes?
He, with laborious and unerring care,
How different and embodied colours form
Thy piercing light, with just distinction found.
He with quick sight pursued thy darting rays,

When penetrating to the' obscure recess
Of solid matter, there perspicuous saw,
How in the texture of each body lay
The power that separates the different beams.
Hence over Nature's unadorned face
Thy bright diversifying rays dilate
Their various hues: and hence, when vernal rains
Descending swift have burst the lowering clouds,
Thy splendours through the dissipating mists
In its fair vesture of unnumber'd hues
Array the showery bow. At thy approach
The Morning risen from her pearly couch
With rosy blushes decks her virgin cheek;
The Evening on the frontispiece of Heav'n
His mantle spreads with many colours gay;
The mid-day skies in radiant azure clad
The shining clouds; and silver vapours rob'd,
In white transparent intermixt with gold,
With bright variety of splendour clothe
All the illuminated face above.
When hoary-headed Winter back retires
To the chill'd pole, there solitary sits
Encompass'd round with winds and tempests bleak
In caverns of impenetrable ice;
And from behind the dissipated gloom,
Like a new Venus from the parting surge,
The gay-apparell'd Spring advances on;
When thou in thy meridian brightness sitt'st,
And from thy throne pure emanations flow
Of glory bursting o'er the radiant skies:
Then let the Muse Olympus' top ascend,
And o'er Thessalia's plain extend her view,
And count, O Tempé, all thy beauties o'er.
Mountains, whose summits grasp the pendent clouds,

Between their wood-envelop'd slopes embrace
The green-attired vallies. Every flower
Here in the pride of bounteous Nature clad
Smiles on the bosom of the' enamell'd meads.
Over the smiling lawn the silver floods
Of fair Peneus gently roll along;
While the reflected colours from the flow'rs,
And verdant borders pierce the limpid waves,
And paint with all their variegated hue
The yellow sands beneath. Smooth gliding on
The waters hasten to the neighbouring sea.
Still the pleas'd eye the floating plain pursues
At length, in Neptune's wide dominion lost
Surveys the shining billows, that arise
Apparell'd each in Phœbus' bright attire:
Or from afar some tall majestic ship,
Or the long hostile lines of threatening fleets,
Which o'er the bright uneven mirror sweep,
In dazzling gold and waving purple deck'd;
Such as of old, when haughty Athens pour
Their hideous front and terrible array
Against Pallene's coast extended wide,
And with tremendous war and battle stern
The trembling walls of Potidæa shook.
Crested with pendants curling with the breeze
The upright masts high bristle in the air,
Aloft exalting proud their gilded heads.
The silver waves against the painted prows
Raise their resplendent bosoms, and impearl
The fair vermilion with their glistering drops:
And from on board the iron-clothed host
Around the main a gleaming horror casts;
Each flaming buckler like the mid-day sun,
Each plumed helmet like the silver moon,

Each moving gauntlet like the lightning's blaze,
And like a star each brazen-pointed spear.
But, lo! the sacred high-erected fanes,
Fair citadels, and marble-crowned towers,
And sumptuous palaces of stately towns
Magnificent arise, upon their heads
Bearing on high a wreath of silver light.
But see, my Muse, the high Pierian hill;
Behold its shaggy locks and airy top;
Up to the skies the' imperious mountain heaves;
The shining verdure of the nodding woods.
See where the silver Hippocrené flows;
Behold its glittering rivulet and rill
Through mazes wander down the green descent,
And sparkle through the interwoven trees;
Here rest awhile and humble homage pay,
Here, where the sacred genius that inspir'd
Sublime Mæonides and Pindar's breast,
His habitation once was fam'd to hold.
Here thou, O Homer! offer'dst up thy vows;
Thee, the kind muse Calliope hath heard,
And led thee to the empyrean seats,
There manifested to the hallow'd eyes
The deeds of gods; thee wise Minerva taught
The wonderous art of knowing human kind;
Harmonious Phœbus tun'd thy heavenly mind,
And swell'd to rapture each exalted sense;
Ev'n Mars, the dreadful battle-ruling god,
Mars taught thee war, and with his bloody hand
Instructed thine, when in thy sounding lines
We hear the rattling of Bellona's car,
The yell of discord, and the din of arms.
Pindar, when mounted on his fiery steed,
Soars to the sun, opposing eagle-like

His eyes undazzled to the fiercest rays.
He, firmly seated, not like Glaucus' son,
Strides his swift-winged and fire-breathing horse,
And borne aloft, strikes with his ringing hoofs
The brazon vault of heaven: superior there
Looks down upon the stars, whose radiant light
Illuminates innumerable worlds,
That through eternal orbits roll beneath.
  But thou all hail, immortalized son
Of harmony, all hail thou Thracian bard,
To whom Apollo gave his tuneful lyre!
O might'st thou, Orpheus, now again revive,
And Newton should inform thy listening ear
How the soft notes, and soul-inchanting strains
Of thy own lyre were on the wind convey'd.
He taught the Muse, how sound progressive floats
Upon the waving particles of air,
When harmony in ever-pleasing strains,
Melodious melting at each lulling fall,
With soft alluring penetration steals
Through the enraptur'd ear to inmost thought,
And folds the senses in its silken bands.
So the sweet music, which from Orpheus' touch
And fam'd Amphion's, on the sounding string
Arose harmonious, gliding on the air,
Pierc'd the tough-bark'd and knotty-ribbed woods,
Into their saps soft inspiration breath'd,
And taught attention to the stubborn oak.
Thus when great Henry, and brave Marlborough led
The' embattled numbers of Britannia's sons,
The trump, that swells the' expanded cheek of fame,
That adds new vigour to the generous youth,
And rouses sluggish cowardice itself,
The trumpet with its Mars-inciting voice,

The winds broad breast impetuous sweeping o'er,
Fill'd the big note of war. The' inspired host
With new-born ardour press the trembling Gaul;
Nor greater throngs had reach'd eternal night,
Not if the fields of Agincourt had yawn'd,
Exposing horrible the gulf of fate;
Or roaring Danube spread his arms abroad,
And overwhelm'd their legions with his floods.
But let the wondering Muse at length return;
Nor yet, angelic genius of the Sun!
In worthy lays her high-attempting song
Has blazon'd forth thy venerated name.
Then let her sweep the loud-resounding lyre
Again, again o'er each melodious string
Teach harmony to tremble with thy praise.
And still thine ear, O favourable grant,
And she shall tell thee, that whatever charms,
Whatever beauties bloom on Nature's face,
Proceed from thy all-influencing light:
That when arising with tempestuous rage,
The North impetuous rides upon the clouds
Dispersing round the heavens obstructive gloom,
And with his dreaded prohibition stays
The kind effusion of thy genial beams;
Pale are the rubies on Aurora's lips,
No more the roses blush upon her cheeks,
Black are Peneus' streams and golden sands,
In Tempé's vale dull Melancholy sits,
And every flower reclines its languid head.
By what high names shall I invoke thee, say,
Thou life-infusing deity, on thee
I call; and look propitious from on high,
While now to thee I offer up my prayer.
O had great Newton, as he found the cause,

By which sound rolls through the' undulating air,
O had he, baffling time's resistless power,
Discover'd what that subtle spirit is,
Or whatsoe'er diffusive else is spread
Over the wide-extended universe,
Which causes bodies to reflect the light,
And from their strait direction to divert
The rapid beams, that through their surface pierce;
But since embrac'd by the' icy arms of age,
And his quick thought by time's cold hand congeal'd,
Ev'n Newton left unknown this hidden power;
Thou from the race of human kind select
Some other worthy of an angel's care;
With inspiration animate his breast,
And him instruct in these thy secret laws.
O let not Newton, to whose spacious view,
Now unobstructed, all the' extensive scenes
Of the ethereal Ruler's works arise,
When he beholds this earth he late adorn'd,
Let him not see Philosophy in tears,
Like a fond mother solitary sit,
Lamenting him, her dear and only child.
But as the wise Pythagoras, and he
Whose birth with pride the fam'd Abdera boasts,
With expectation having long survey'd
This spot their ancient seat, with joy beheld
Divine Philosophy at length appear
In all her charms majestically fair,
Conducted by immortal Newton's hand:
So may he see another sage arise,
That shall maintain her empire: then no more
Imperious ignorance with haughty sway
Shall stalk rapacious o'er the ravag'd globe:
Then thou, O Newton! shalt protect these lines,

The humble tribute of the grateful Muse;
Ne'er shall the sacrilegious hand despoil
Her laurell'd temples, whom his name preserves.
And were she equal to the mighty theme,
Futurity should wonder at her song;
Time should receive her with extended arms,
Seat her conspicuous in his rolling car,
And bear her down to his extremest bound.
  Fables with wonder tell, how Terra's sons
With iron force unloos'd the stubborn nerves
Of hills, and on the cloud-inshrouded top
Of Pelion Ossa pil'd. But if the vast
Gigantic deeds of savage strength demand
Astonishment from men, what then shalt thou,
O what expressive rapture of the soul,
When thou before us, Newton, dost display
The labours of thy great excelling mind;
When thou unveilest all the wondrous scene,
The vast idea of the' eternal King;
Not dreadful bearing in his angry arm
The thunder hanging o'er our trembling heads;
But with the' effulgency of love replete,
And clad with power, which form'd the' extensive
heavens?
O happy ye, whose enterprising hand
Unbars the golden and relucid gates
Of the' empyrean dome, where thou enthron'd,
Philosophy, art seated. Thou sustain'd
By the firm hand of everlasting Truth
Despisest all the injuries of time:
Thou never know'st decay, when, all around,
Antiquity obscures her head. Behold
The' Egyptian towers, the Babylonian walls,
And Thebes with all her hundred gates of brass,

Behold them scatter'd like the dust abroad.
Whatever now is flourishing and proud,
Whatever shall, must know devouring age.
Euphrates' stream, and seven-mouthed Nile,
And Danube, thou that from Germania's soil
To the black Euxine's far remoted shore,
O'er the wide bounds of mighty nations sweep'st
In thunder loud thy rapid floods along,
E'en you shall feel inexorable Time;
To you the fatal day shall come; no more
Your torrents then shall shake the trembling ground,
No longer then to inundations swol'n
The' imperious waves the fertile pastures drench,
But shrunk within a narrow channel glide;
Or through the year's reiterated course,
When Time himself grows old, your wonderous streams
Lost e'en to memory, shall lie unknown
Beneath obscurity, and chaos whelm'd.
But still thou, Sun! illuminatest all
The azure regions round; thou guidest still
The orbits of the planetary spheres:
The Moon still wanders o'er her changing course;
And still, O Newton, shall thy name survive
As long as Nature's hand directs the world;
When every dark obstruction shall retire,
And every secret yield its hidden store,
Which thee dim-sighted age forbade to see,
Age that alone could stay thy rising soul,
And could mankind among the fixed stars,
E'en to the' extremest bounds of knowledge reach,
To those unknown innumerable suns,
Whose light but glimmers from those distant worlds
Ev'n to those utmost boundaries, those bars

That shut the entrance of the' illumin'd space
Where angels only tread the vast unknown,
Thou ever should'st be seen immortal there
In each new sphere, each new-appearing sun,
In farthest regions at the very verge
Of the wide universe shouldst thou be seen.
And lo! the' all potent goddess, Nature, takes
With her own hand thy great, thy just reward
Of immortality; aloft in air
See she displays, and with eternal grasp,
Uprears the trophies of great Newton's fame!

LONDON:

OR, THE PROGRESS OF COMMERCE.

Ye northern blasts, and Eurus[1], wont to sweep
With rudest pinions o'er the furrow'd waves,
Awhile suspend your violence, and waft
From sandy Weser[2] and the broad-mouth'd Elbe
My freighted vessels to the destin'd shore,
Safe o'er the' unruffled main; let every thought,
Which may disquiet, and alarm my breast,
Be absent now; that, dispossess'd of care,
And free from every tumult of the mind,
With each disturbing passion hush'd to peace,
I may pour all my spirit on the theme,
Which opens now before me, and demands
The loftiest strain. The eagle, when he tow'rs
Beyond the clouds, the fleecy robes of Heav'n

[1] The east-wind.

[2] Bremen is situated on the Weser, and Hamburgh on the Elbe.

Disdains all objects but the golden Sun;
Full on the' effulgent orb directs his eye,
And sails exulting through the blaze of day:
So, while her wing attempts the boldest flight,
Rejecting each inferior theme of praise,
Thee, ornament of Europe, Albion's pride,
Fair seat of wealth and freedom, thee my Muse
Shall celebrate, O London! thee she hails.
Thou lov'd abode of Commerce, last retreat,
Whence she contemplates with a tranquil mind
Her various wanderings from the fated hour
That she abandon'd her maternal clime;
Neptunian Commerce, whom Phœnice bore,
Illustrious nymph, that nam'd the fertile plains
Along the sounding main extended far,
Which flowery Carmel with its sweet perfumes,
And with its cedars Libanus o'ershades:
Her from the bottom of the watry world,
As once she stood, in radiant beauties grac'd,
To mark the heaving tide, the piering eye
Of Neptune view'd enamour'd: from the deep
The god ascending rushes to the beach,
And clasps the' affrighted virgin. From that day,
Soon as the paly regent of the night
Nine times her monthly progress had renew'd
Through heaven's illumin'd vault, Phœnice, led
By shame, once more the sea-worn margin sought;
There pac'd with painful steps the barren sands,
A solitary mourner; and the surge,
Which gently roll'd beside her, now no more
With placid eyes beholding, thus exclaim'd:

'Ye fragrant shrubs and cedars! lofty shade,
Which crown my native hills; ye spreading palms!
That rise majestic on these fruitful meads,

With you who gave the lost Phœnice birth,
And you, who bear the' endearing name of friends,
Once faithful partners of my chaster hours,
Farewell! To thee, perfidious god, I come,
Bent down with pain and anguish on thy sands,
I come thy suppliant: death is all I crave:
Bid thy devouring waves inwrap my head,
And to the bottom whelm my cares and shame!'
She ceas'd; when sudden from the' enclosing deep
A crystal car emerg'd, with glittering shells,
(Cull'd from their oozy beds by Tethys' train)
And blushing coral deck'd, whose ruddy glow
Mix'd with the watery lustre of the pearl.
A smiling band of sea-born nymphs attend,
Who from the shore with gentle hands convey
The fear-subdued Phœnice, and along
The lucid chariot place. As there with dread
All mute, and struggling with her painful throes,
She lay, the winds by Neptune's high command
Were silent round her; not a zephyr dar'd
To wanton o'er the cedar's branching top.
Nor on the plain the stately palm was seen
To wave its graceful verdure; o'er the main
No undulation broke the smooth expanse,
But all was hush'd and motionless around,
All but the lightly sliding car, impell'd
Along the level azure by the strength
Of active Tritons, rivalling in speed
The rapid meteor, whose sulphureous train
Glides o'er the brow of darkness, and appears
The livid ruins of a falling star.
Beneath the Lybian skies, a blissful isle,
By Triton's[3] floods encircled, Nysa lay.

[3] Triton, a river and lake of ancient Lybia.

Here youthful Nature wanton'd in delights,
And here the guardians of the bounteous horn,
While it was now the infancy of Time,
Nor yet the' uncultivated globe had learn'd
To smile, Eucarpé[4], Dapsiléa[5] dwelt,
With all the nymphs, whose sacred care had nurs'd
The eldest Bacchus. From the flowery shore
A turf-clad valley opens, and along
Its verdure mild the willing feet allures;
While on its sloping sides ascends the pride
Of hoary groves, high arching o'er the vale
With day-rejecting gloom. The solemn shade
Half round a spacious lawn at length expands,
Clos'd by a towering cliff[6], whose forehead glows
With azure, purple, and ten thousand dyes,
From its resplendent fragments beaming round;
Nor less irradiate colours from beneath
On every side an ample grot reflects,
As down the perforated rock the sun
Pours his meridian blaze: rever'd abode
Of Nysa's nymphs, with every plant attir'd,
That wears undying green, refresh'd with rills
From ever-living fountains, and enrich'd
With all Pomona's bloom: unfading flowers
Glow on the mead, and spicy shrubs perfume
With inexhausted sweets the cooling gale,
Which breathes incessant there; while every bird
Of tuneful note his gay or plaintive song
Blends with the warble of meandering streams,
Which o'er their pebbled channels murmuring lave

4 Fruitfulness.

5 Plenty.

6 This whole description of the rock and grotto is taken from Diodorus Siculus, lib. 3.

The fruit-invested hills, that rise around.
The gentle Nereids to this calm recess
Phœnice bear; nor Dapsiléa bland,
Nor good Eucarpé, studious to obey
Great Neptune's will, their hospitable care
Refuse; nor long Lucina is invok'd.
Soon as the wondrous infant sprung to day,
Earth rock'd around; with all their nodding woods,
And streams reverting to their troubled source,
The mountain shook, while Lybia's neighbouring god,
Mysterious Ammon, from his hollow cell
With deep-resounding accent thus to heaven,
To earth, and sea, the mighty birth proclaim'd:
'A new-born power behold! whom fate hath call'd
The gods' imperfect labour to complete
This wide creation. She in lonely sands
Shall bid the tower-encircled city rise,
The barren sea shall people, and the wilds
Of dreary nature shall with plenty clothe;
She shall enlighten man's unletter'd race,
And with endearing intercourse unite
Remotest nations, scorch'd by sultry suns,
Or freezing near the snow-incrusted pole:
Where'er the joyous vine disdains to grow,
The fruitful olive, or the golden ear;
Her hand divine, with interposing aid,
To every climate shall the gifts supply
Of Ceres, Bacchus, and the' Athenian maid[7];
The graces, joys, emoluments of life,
From her exhaustless bounty all shall flow.'

[7] Minerva, the tutelary goddess of the Athenians, to whom she gave the olive.

The heavenly prophet ceas'd. Olympus heard.
Straight from their star-bespangled thrones descend
On blooming Nysa a celestial band,
The ocean's lord to honour in his child;
When o'er his offspring smiling thus began
The trident ruler: 'Commerce be thy name!
To thee I give the empire of the main;
From where the morning breathes its eastern gale,
To the' undiscover'd limits of the west,
From chilling Boreas to extremest south
Thy sire's obsequious billows shall extend
Thy universal reign.'—Minerva next
With wisdom bless'd her, Mercury with art,
The Lemnian god[8] with industry, and last
Majestic Phœbus, o'er the infant long
In contemplation pausing, thus declar'd
From his enraptur'd lip his matchless boon:
'Thee, with divine invention I endow,
That secret wonder, goddess, to disclose,
By which the wise, the virtuous, and the brave,
The heaven-taught poet and exploring sage
Shall pass recorded to the verge of time.'
Her years of childhood now were number'd o'er,
When to her mother's natal soil repair'd
The new divinity, whose parting step
Her sacred nurses follow'd, ever now
To her alone inseparably join'd;
Then first deserting their Nyseian shore
To spread their hoarded blessings round the world;
Who with them bore the unexhausted horn
Of ever-smiling plenty. Thus adorn'd,
Attended thus, great goddess, thou began'st

[8] Vulcan, the tutelar deity of Lemnos.

Thy all-enlivening progress o'er the globe,
Then rude and joyless, destin'd to repair
The various ills which earliest ages rued
From one, like thee, distinguish'd by the gifts
Of Heaven, Pandora, whose pernicious hand
From the dire vase releas'd the' imprison'd woes.
Thou, gracious Commerce, from his cheerless caves
In horrid rocks and solitary woods,
The helpless wanderer, man, forlorn and wild,
Didst charm to sweet society; didst cast
The deep foundations, where the future pride
Of mightiest cities rose, and o'er the main
Before the wondering Nereids didst present
The surge-dividing keel, and stately mast,
Whose canvas-wings, distending with the gale,
The bold Phœnician through Alcides' straits
To northern Albion's tin-embowell'd fields,
And oft beneath the sea-obscuring brow
Of cloud-envelop'd Teneriff, convey'd.
Next in sagacious thought the' ethereal plains
Thou trod'st, exploring each propitious star
The danger braving mariner to guide;
Then all the latent and mysterious powers
Of number didst unravel: last to crown
Thy bounties, goddess, thy unrival'd toils
For man, still urging thy inventive mind,
Thou gav'st him letters[9]; there imparting all
Which lifts the' ennobled spirit near to Heaven,
Laws, learning, wisdom, Nature's works reveal'd
By godlike sages, all Minerva's arts,
Apollo's music, and the' eternal voice

9 Here the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton is followed, that letters were first invented amongst the trading parts of the world.

Of virtue sounding from the' historic roll,
The philosophic page, and poet's song.
  Now Solitude and Silence from the shores
Retreat, on pathless mountains to reside;
Barbarity is polish'd; infant Arts
Bloom in the desart, and benignant Peace
With Hospitality begin to soothe
Unsocial Rapine, and the thirst of blood.
As from his tumid urn when Nilus spreads
His genial tides abroad, the favour'd soil
That joins his fruitful border, first imbibes
The kindly stream: anon the bounteous god
His waves extends, embracing Egypt round,
Dwells on the teeming champaign, and endows
The sleeping grain with vigour to attire
In one bright harvest all the Pharian plains:
Thus, when Pygmalion from Phœnician Tyre
Had banish'd Freedom, with disdainful steps
Indignant Commerce, turning from the walls
Herself had rais'd, her welcome sway enlarg'd
Among the nations, spreading round the globe
The fruits of all its climes; Cecropian [10] oil,
The Thracian vintage, and Panchaian gums,
Arabia's spices, and the golden grain
Which old Osiris to his Egypt gave,
And Ceres to Sicania [11]. Thou didst raise
The' Ionian name, O Commerce! thou the domes
Of sumptuous Corinth, and the ample round
Of Syracuse didst people.——All the wealth
Now thou assemblest from Iberia's mines,
And golden-channell'd Tagus, all the spoils

[10] Athenian. Athens was called Cecropia, from Cecrops its first king.

[11] Sicily.

From fair Trinacria[12] wasted, all the powers
Of conquer'd Afric's tributary realms,
To fix thy empire on the Lybian verge,
Thy native tract; the nymphs of Nysa hail
Thy glad return, and echoing joy resounds
O'er Triton's sacred waters, but in vain:
The irreversible decrees of Heaven
To far more northern regions had ordain'd
Thy lasting seat: in vain the' imperial port
Receives the gather'd riches of the world;
In vain whole climates bow beneath its rule;
Behold the toil of centuries to Rome
Its glories yield, and mouldering leaves no trace
Of its deep-rooted greatness; thou with tears
From thy extingush'd Carthage didst retire,
And these thy perish'd honours long deplore.
What though rich Gades[13], what though polish'd Rhodes,
With Alexandria, Egypt's splendid mart,
The learn'd Massylians[14], and Ligurian[15] towers;
What though the potent Hanseatic league,
And Venice, mistress of the Grecian isles,
With all the' Ægean floods, awhile might soothe
The sad remembrance; what though led through climes
And seas unknown, with thee the' adventurous sons
Of Tagus[16] pass'd the stormy cape, which braves

[12] Another name of Sicily, which was frequently ravaged by the Carthaginians.

[13] Cadiz.

[14] Marseilles, a Grecian colony, the most civilized as well as the greatest trading city of ancient Gaul.

[15] Genoa.

[16] The Portuguese discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1487.

The huge Atlantic; what though Antwerp grew
Beneath thy smiles, and thou propitious there
Didst shower thy blessings with unsparing hands:
Still on thy grief-indented heart impress'd
The great Amilcar's valour, still the deeds
Of Asdrubal and Mago, still the loss
Of thy unequal, Annibal, remain'd:
Till from the sandy mouths of echoing Rhine,
And sounding margin of the Scheldt and Maese,
With sudden roar the angry voice of War
Alarm'd thy languor; wonder turn'd thy eye.
Lo! in bright arms a bold militia stood,
Arrang'd for battle: from afar thou saw'st
The snowy ridge of Appenine, the fields
Of wild Calabria, and Pyrene's hills,
The Guadiana, and the Duro's banks,
And rapid Ebro gathering all their powers
To crush this daring populace, the pride
Of fiercest kings with more enflam'd revenge
Ne'er menac'd freedom; nor, since dauntless Greece,
And Rome's stern offspring, none hath e'er surpass'd
The bold Batavian[17] in his glorious toil
For liberty, or death. At once the thought
Of long-lamented Carthage flies thy breast,
And ardent, goddess, thou dost speed to save
The generous people. Not the vernal showers,
Distilling copious from the morning clouds,
Descend more kindly on the tender flower,
New-born and opening on the lap of Spring,
Than on this rising state thy cheering smile,
And animating presence; while on Spain,
Prophetic thus, thy indignation broke:

[17] The Dutch.

'Insatiate race! the shame of polish'd lands!
Disgrace of Europe! for inhuman deeds
And insolence renown'd! what demon led
Thee first to plough the undiscover'd surge,
Which lav'd an hidden world? whose malice taught
Thee first to taint with rapine and with rage,
With more than savage thirst of blood the Arts,
By me for gentlest intercourse ordain'd,
For mutual aids, and hospitable ties
From shore to shore? Or, that pernicious hour,
Was Heaven disgusted with its wondrous works,
That to thy fell exterminating hand
The' immense Peruvian empire it resign'd,
And all, which lordly Montezuma[18] sway'd?
And com'st thou, strengthened with the shining stores
Of that gold-teeming hemisphere, to waste
The smiling fields of Europe, and extend
Thy bloody shackles o'er these happy seats
Of liberty? Presumptuous nation, learn,
From this dire period shall thy glories fade,
Thy slaughter'd youth shall fatten Belgium's sands,
And victory against her Albion's cliffs
Shall see the blood-empurpled ocean dash
Thy weltering hosts, and stain the chalky shore:
Ev'n those, whom now thy impious pride would bind
In servile chains, hereafter shall support
Thy weaken'd throne; when Heaven's afflicting hand
Of all thy power despoils thee, when alone
Of all, which e'er hath signaliz'd thy name,
Thy insolence and cruelty remain.'

[18] Montezuma, emperor of Mexico.

Thus with her clouded visage, wrapt in frowns,
The goddess threaten'd, and the daring train
Of her untam'd militia, torn with wounds,
Despising fortune, from repeated foils
More fierce, and braving famine's keenest rage,
At length through deluges of blood she led
To envied greatness; ev'n while clamorous Mars
With loudest clangor bade his trumpet shake
The Belgian champaign, she their standard rear'd
On tributary Java, and the shores
Of huge Borneo; thou, Sumatra, heard'st
Her naval thunder, Ceylon's trembling sons
Their fragrant stores of cinnamon resign'd;
And odour-breathing Ternate and Tidore
Their spicy groves. And Oh! whatever coast
The Belgians trace, where'er their power is spread,
To hoary Zembla, or to Indian suns,
Still thither be extended thy renown,
O William, pride of Orange! and ador'd
Thy virtues; which disdaining life, or wealth,
Or empire, whether in thy dawn of youth,
Thy glorious noon of manhood, or the night,
The fatal night of death[19], no other care
Besides the public own. And dear to fame
Be thou, harmonious Douza[20]; every Muse,
Your laurel strow around this hero's urn,
Whom fond Minerva grac'd with all her arts,
Alike in letters and in arms to shine,

[19] He was assassinated at Delf. His dying words were, 'Lord! have mercy upon this people.'

See Grot. de Bell. Belg.

[20] Janus Douza, a famous poet, and the most learned man of his time. He commanded in Leyden when it was so obstinately besieged by the Spaniards in 1570.

See Meursii Athen. Bat.

A dauntless warrior, and a learned bard.
Him Spain's surrounding host for slaughter mark'd,
With massacre yet reeking from the streets
Of blood-stain'd Harlem: he, on Leyden's towers
With famine his companion, wan, subdued
In outward form, with patient virtue stood
Superior to despair; the heavenly Nine
His suffering soul with great examples cheer'd
Of memorable bards, by Mars adorn'd
With wreaths of fame; Œagrus' tuneful son[21],
Who with melodious praise to noblest deeds
Charm'd the Iolchian heroes, and himself
Their danger shar'd; Tyrtæus[22], who reviv'd
With animating verse the Spartan hopes;
Brave Æschylus[23] and Sophocles[24], around
Whose sacred brows the tragic ivy twin'd,
Mix'd with the warrior's laurel; all surpass'd
By Douza's valour; and the generous toil,
His and his country's labours soon receiv'd
Their high reward, when favouring commerce rais'd
The' invincible Batavian's, till, rever'd
Among the mightiest on the brightest roll
Of fame they shone, by splendid wealth and power
Grac'd and supported: thus a genial soil
Diffusing vigour through the infant oak,
Affords it strength to flourish, till at last

[21] Orpheus, one of the Argonauts, who set sail from Iolchos, a town in Thessalia.

[22] When the Spartans were greatly distressed in the Messenian war, they applied to the Athenians for a general, who sent them the poet Tyrtæus.

[23] Æschylus, one of the most ancient tragic poets, who signalized himself in the battles of Marathon and Salamis.

[24] Sophocles commanded his countrymen the Athenians, in several expeditions.

Its lofty head, in verdant honours clad,
It rears amidst the proudest of the grove.
Yet here the' eternal fates thy last retreat
Deny; a mightier nation they prepare
For thy reception, sufferers alike
By the' unremitted insolence of power
From reign to reign, nor less than Belgium known
For bold contention oft on crimson fields,
In free-tongued senates oft with nervous laws
To circumscribe, or conquering to depose
Their sceptred tyrants: Albion, sea-embrac'd,
The joy of freedom, dread of treacherous kings,
The destin'd mistress of the subject main,
And arbitress of Europe, now demands
Thy presence, goddess! It was now the time,
Ere yet perfidious Cromwell dar'd profane
The sacred senate, and with impious feet
Tread on the powers of magistrates and laws,
While every arm was chill'd with cold amaze,
Nor one in all that dauntless train was found
To pierce the ruffian's heart; and now thy name
Was heard in thunder through the' affrighted shores
Of pale Iberia, of submissive Gaul,
And Tagus, trembling to his utmost source.
O ever faithful, vigilant, and brave,
Thou bold assertor of Britannia's fame,
Unconquerable Blake! propitious Heaven
At this great era, and the sage decree[25]
Of Albion's senate, perfecting at once
What by Eliza[26] was so well begun,
So deeply founded, to this favour'd shore

[25] The act of navigation.

[26] Queen Elizabeth was the first of our princes, who gave any considerable encouragement to trade.

The goddess drew, where grateful she bestow'd
The' unbounded empire of her father's floods,
And chose thee, London, for her chief abode;
Pleas'd with the silver Thames, its gentle stream,
And smiling banks, its joy-diffusing hills,
Which clad with splendour, and with beauty grac'd,
O'erlook his lucid bosom; pleas'd with thee,
Thou nurse of arts, and thy industrious race;
Pleas'd with their candid manners, with their free
Sagacious converse, to inquiry led,
And zeal for knowledge: hence the opening mind
Resigns its errors, and unseals the eye
Of blind opinion; merit hence is heard
Amidst its blushes, dawning Arts arise;
The gloomy clouds which ignorance or fear
Spread o'er the paths of virtue are dispell'd,
Servility retires, and every heart
With public cares is warm'd; thy merchants hence,
Illustrious city, thou dost raise to fame.
How many names of glory may'st thou trace
From earliest annals down to Barnard's[27] times!
And, O! if like that eloquence divine,
Which forth for commerce, for Britannia's rights,
And her insulted majesty he pour'd,
These humble measures flow'd, then too thy walls
Might undisgrac'd resound thy poet's name;
Who now, all-fearful, to thy praise attunes
His lyre, and pays his grateful song to thee,
Thy votary, O Commerce! Gracious Power,
Continue still to hear my vows, and bless
My honourable industry, which courts
No other smile but thine; for thou alone

[27] Sir John Barnard.

Can'st wealth bestow with independence crown'd.
Nor yet exclude contemplative repose,
But to my dwelling grant the solemn calm
Of learned leisure, never to reject
The visitation of the tuneful maids,
Who seldom deign to leave their sacred haunts,
And grace a mortal mansion; thou divide
With them my labours; pleasure I resign,
And, all devoted to my midnight lamp,
E'en now, when Albion o'er the foaming breast
Of groaning Tethys spreads its threatening fleets,
I grasp the sounding shell, prepar'd to sing
That hero's valour, who shall best confound
His injur'd country's foes; ev'n now I feel
Celestial fires descending on my breast,
Which prompt thy daring suppliant to explore,
Why, though deriv'd from Neptune, though rever'd
Among the nations, by the gods endow'd,
Thou never yet from eldest times hast found
One permanent abode: why oft expell'd,
Thy favour'd seats, from clime to clime hast borne
Thy wandering steps; why London late hath seen
(Thy lov'd, thy last retreat), desponding care
O'ercloud thy brow: O listen, while the Muse,
The' immortal progeny of Jove, unfolds
The fatal cause. What time in Nysa's cave
The' ethereal train, in honour to thy sire,
Shower'd on thy birth their blended gifts, the power
Of war was absent; hence, unbless'd by Mars,
Thy sons relinquish'd arms, on other arts
Intent, and still to mercenary hands
The sword intrusting, vainly deem'd that wealth
Could purchase lasting safety, and protect
Unwarlike freedom; hence the Alps in vain

Were pass'd, their long impenetrable snows,
And dreary torrents; swoln with Roman dead,
Astonish'd Trebia[28] overflow'd its banks
In vain, and deep-dy'd Trasimenus roll'd
Its crimson waters; Cannæ's signal day
The fame alone of great Amilcar's son
Enlarg'd, while still undisciplin'd, dismay'd,
Her head commercial Carthage bow'd at last
To military Rome: the' unalter'd will
Of Heaven in every climate hath ordain'd,
And every age, that empire shall attend
The sword, and steel shall ever conquer gold.
Then from thy sufferings learn; the' auspicious hour
Now smiles; our wary magistrates have arm'd
Our hands; thou, goddess! animate our breasts
To cast inglorious indolence aside,
That once again, in bright battalions rang'd,
Our thousands and ten thousands may be seen
Their country's only rampart, and the dread
Of wild ambition. Mark the Swedish hind;
He on his native soil, should danger lour,
Soon from the entrails of the dusky mine
Would rise to arms; and other fields and chiefs
With Helsingburg[29] and Steinboch soon would share
The admiration of the northern world:
Helvetia's hills behold, the' aërial seat
Of long-supported liberty, who thence,

[28] Trebia, Trasimenus Lacus, and Cannæ, famous for the victories gained by Hannibal over the Romans.

[29] Helsingburg, a small town in Schonem, celebrated for the victory which Count Steinboch gained over the Danes, with an army for the most part composed of Swedish peasants, who had never seen an enemy before; it is remarkable, that the defeated troops were as complete a body of regular forces as any in all Europe.

Securely resting on her faithful shield,
The warrior's corselet flaming on her breast,
Looks down with scorn on spacious realms, which groan
In servitude around her; and her sword
With dauntless skill high brandishing, defies
The Austrian eagle, and imperious Gaul.
And O! could those ill-fated shades arise,
Whose valiant ranks along the' ensanguin'd dust
Of Newbury[30] lay crowded, they could tell,
How their long-matchless cavalry, so oft
O'er hills of slain by ardent Rupert led,
Whose dreaded standard Victory had wav'd,
Till then triumphant, there with noblest blood
From their gor'd squadrons dy'd the restive spear
Of London's firm militia, and resign'd
The well-disputed field; then goddess, say,
Shall we be now more timid, when, behold,
The blackening storm now gathers round our heads,
And England's angry genius sounds to arms?
For thee, remember, is the banner spread;
The naval tower to vindicate thy rights
Will sweep the curling foam: the thundering bomb
Will roar, and startle in the deepest grots

[30] The London train-band, and auxiliary regiments (of whose inexperience of danger, or any kind of service, beyond the easy practice of their postures in the Artillery-Ground, had till then too cheap an estimation), behaved themselves to wonder; and were, in truth, the preservation of that army that day. For they stood as a bulwark and rampire to defend the rest; and when their wings of horse were scattered and dispersed, kept their ground so steadily, that though Prince Rupert himself led up the choice horse to charge them, and endured the storm of small shot, he could make no impression on their stand of pikes: but was forced to wheel about. *Clarend. book* 7, *page* 347.

Old Nereus' daughters; with combustion stor'd,
For thee our dire volcanos of the main,
Impregnated with horror, soon will pour
Their flaming ruin round each hostile fleet:
Thou then, great goddess! summon all thy powers,
Arm all thy sons, thy vassals, every heart
Inflame: and you, ye fear-disclaiming race,
Ye mariners of Britain, chosen train
Of liberty and commerce, now no more
Secrete your generous valour; hear the call
Of injur'd Albion; to her foes present
Those daring bosoms, which alike disdain
The death-disploding cannon, and the rage
Of warring tempests, mingling in their strife
The seas and clouds: though long in silence hush'd
Hath slept the British thunder; though the pride
Of weak Iberia hath forgot the roar;
Soon shall her ancient terrors be recall'd,
When your victorious shouts affright her shores:
None now ignobly will your warmth restrain,
Nor hazard more indignant valour's curse,
Their country's wrath, and time's eternal scorn.
Then bid the furies of Bellona wake,
And silver-mantled peace with welcome steps
Anon shall visit your triumphant isle.
And that perpetual safety may possess
Our joyous fields, thou, genius, who presid'st
O'er this illustrious city, teach her sons
To wield the noble instruments of war;
And let the great example soon extend
Through every province, till Britannia sees
Her docile millions fill the martial plain:
Then, whatsoe'er our terrors now suggest

Of desolation, and the' invading sword;
Though with his massy trident Neptune heav'd
A new-born isthmus from the British deep,
And to its parent-continent rejoin'd
Our chalky shore; though Mahomet could league
His powerful crescent with the hostile Gaul,
And that new Cyrus of the conquer'd east,
Who now in trembling vassalage unites
The Ganges and Euphrates, could advance
With his auxiliar-host; our warlike youth
With equal numbers [31], and with keener zeal
For children, parents, friends, for England fir'd,
Her fertile glebe, her wealthy towns, her laws,
Her liberty, her honour, should sustain
The dreadful onset, and resistless break
The' immense array: thus e'en the lightest thought
E'er to invade Britannia's calm repose,
Must die the moment that auspicious Mars
Her sons shall bless with discipline and arms;
That exil'd race, in superstition nurs'd,
The servile pupils of tyrannic Rome,
With distant gaze despairing, shall behold
The guarded splendours of Britannia's crown;
Still from their abdicated sway estrang'd,
With all the' attendance on despotic thrones,
Priests, ignorance, and bonds; with watchful step
Gigantic Terror, striding round our coast,
Shall shake his gorgon-ægis, and the hearts

[31] If the computation, which allots near two millions of fighting men to this kingdom, may be relied on, it is not easy to conceive, how the united force of the whole world could assemble together, and subsist in an enemy's country, greater numbers than they would find opposed to them here.

Of proudest kings appal; to other shores
Our angry fleets, when insolence and wrongs
To arms awaken our vindictive power,
Shall bear the hideous waste of ruthless war;
But liberty, security, and fame,
Shall dwell for ever on our chosen plains.

ADMIRAL HOSIER'S GHOST.

As near Porto-Bello lying
On the gently-swelling flood,
At midnight with streamers flying
Our triumphant navy rode;
There while Vernon sat all-glorious
From the Spaniards' late defeat:
And his crews, with shouts victorious,
Drank success to England's fleet:

On a sudden, shrilly sounding,
Hideous yells and shrieks were heard;
Then each heart with fear confounding,
A sad troop of ghosts appear'd,
All in dreary hammocks shrouded;
Which for winding-sheets they wore,
And with looks by sorrow clouded
Frowning on that hostile shore.

On them gleam'd the moon's wan lustre,
When the shade of Hosier brave
His pale bands was seen to muster,
Rising from their watery grave:

O'er the glimmering wave he hied him,
Where the Burford rear'd her sail,
With three thousand ghosts beside him,
And in groans did Vernon hail:—

'Heed, O heed, our fatal story,
I am Hosier's injur'd ghost:
You, who now have purchas'd glory
At this place where I was lost;
Though in Porto-Bello's ruin
You now triumph free from fears;
When you think on our undoing,
You will mix your joy with tears.

'See these mournful spectres sweeping
Ghastly o'er this hated wave,
Whose wan cheeks are stain'd with weeping;
These were English captains brave:
Mark those numbers pale and horrid,
Those were once my sailors bold;
Lo, each hangs his drooping forehead,
While his dismal tale is told.

'I, by twenty sail attended,
Did this Spanish town affright;
Nothing then its wealth defended
But my orders not to fight:
O! that in this rolling ocean
I had cast them with disdain,
And obey'd my heart's warm motion,
To have quell'd the pride of Spain!

For resistance I could fear none,
But with twenty ships had done
What thou, brave and happy Vernon,
Hast atchiev'd with six alone.
Then the Bastimentos never
Had our foul dishonour seen,
Nor the sea the sad receiver
Of this gallant train had been.

'Thus, like thee, proud Spain dismaying,
And her galleons leading home;
Though condemn'd for disobeying,
I had met a traitor's doom.
To have fallen, my country crying
He has play'd an English part,
Had been better far than dying
Of a griev'd and broken heart.

'Unrepining at thy glory,
Thy successful arms we hail;
But remember our sad story,
And let Hosier's wrongs prevail:
Sent in this foul clime to languish,
Think what thousands fell in vain,
Wasted with disease and anguish,
Not in glorious battle slain.

'Hence with all my train attending,
From their oozy tombs below,
Through the hoary foam ascending,
Here I feed my constant woe;

Here the Bastimentos viewing,
We recal our shameful doom,
And our plaintive cries renewing,
Wander through the midnight gloom.

'O'er these waves for ever mourning
Shall we roam depriv'd of rest,
If to Britain's shores returning
You neglect my just request;
After this proud foe subduing,
When your patriot friends you see,
Think on vengeance for my ruin,
And for England sham'd in me.'

FINIS.

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